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FRIENDS, SOCIETY OF (PROGRESSIVE).  
PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING.

PROCEEDINGS

1858

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting

OF

PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS,

INCLUDING

FOUR SERMONS BY THEODORE PARKER.

1858.

"Serves best the Father he who most serves man,  
And he who wrongs humanity wrongs Heaven."

NEW YORK:

OLIVER JOHNSON, 138 NASSAU STREET.

SOLD ALSO AT THE ANTI-SLAVERY OFFICES IN PHILADELPHIA  
AND BOSTON.

1858.

## THE CONFERENCE OF 1853.

THE PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING OF PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS was organized by a Religious Conference, held in 1853. In compliance with a wish expressed by some friends, and in order that those hitherto unacquainted with the movement may see the catholic spirit and world-wide purposes in which it originated, the Call of that Conference is inserted here.

*Call for a General Religious Conference, with a view to the establishment of a Yearly Meeting in Pennsylvania.*

The various religious denominations in the land are arrayed against the progressive spirit of the age, and by their very structure, assumptions and regulations, cannot occupy a co-operative position, because they impose fetters upon freedom of speech and of conscience, by requiring a slavish conformity in matters of abstract faith and sectarian discipline. This has led and is leading to extensive secessions from such organizations, in all parts of the country, leaving the seceders generally in a scattered and isolated condition, whose talents, influence and means might be profitably concentrated for the advancement of the world-embracing cause of Human Brotherhood, and who are yearning for some form of association at once simple, free and attractive.

The abuse of a good thing is not a reason for its utter rejection; and organization, in itself considered, is not only proper, but may be rendered powerfully efficacious as an instrument in the hand of Reform, without impairing the liberty, detracting from the independence, or limiting the conscience of any individual; though from the nature of things its perpetuation is not to be expected or desired, but it is at all times to be regarded as a means to an end, and to be discarded whenever it becomes an impediment to the progress of truth.

The Society of Friends has been a theatre of agitation for years, growing out of ecclesiastical domination on the one hand, and the demand for practical righteousness on the other; a domination entirely at variance with the spirit of primitive Quakerism, seeking to suppress free thought and to exclude from membership those whose lives are without blemish, whose example in word and deed is as a burning and shining light, and who are seeking to know and do the will of God at whatever sacrifice; a domination which has been deemed so intolerable, that in the States of *New York*, *Ohio* and *Michigan*, Yearly Meetings have been formed, two of which have taken the name of **CONGREGATIONAL FRIENDS**, and two others that of **PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS**, and which invite to membership "all those who look to God as a Universal Father, and who regard as one Brotherhood the whole family of man."

In view of facts like these, and believing there is an extensive preparation of mind for such a movement, we cordially invite not only the members of the Society of Friends, but all those who feel the want of social and religious co-operation, and believe that a Society may be formed, recognizing the *Progressive Element* which will divorce Religion from *Technical Theology*, to meet with us in **GENERAL CONFERENCE** at Friends' meeting-house, at Old Kennett, in Chester County, Pennsylvania, on First day, the 22d of Fifth month, 1853, to deliberate upon such plan of organization as may commend itself to the judgment of those assembled, and to take action upon such other subjects pertaining to Human Duty and Welfare, as may appear to demand the attention of the assembly.

AMOS PEPPER,	THAMAZIN MEREDITH,	JAMES PAINTER,
JONATHAN LAMBORN,	ISAAC MENDENHALL,	ESTHER MOORE,
MOSES PENNOCK,	DINAH MENDENHALI,	EBENEZER JAMES,
MARY J. PENNOCK,	VINCENT BARNARD,	REBECCA L. FUSSELL,
BENJAMIN PYLE,	BENJAMIN KENT,	EPHEMIA WILSON,
ESTHER HAYES,	THOMAS BORTON,	GEORGE CHAPMAN,
CASTNER HANWAY,	BEULAH BORTON,	RICHARD JANNEY,
SUMNER STEBBINS,	BARTHOLOMEW FUSSELL,	CYRUS M. BURLEIGH,
HANNAH COX,	REBECCA FUSSELL,	ROBERT PURVIS,
JESSE PENNOCK,	ANN COATES,	HARRIET PURVIS,
HANNAH M. DARLINGTON,	JAMES FULTON,	ELIJAH F. PENNYPACKER,
OLIVER JOHNSON,	ANN FULTON,	JACOB L. PAXSON,
JAMES MEREDITH,	ENOCH S. HANNUM,	BARCLAY IVINS,
SARAH B. DUGDALE,	ENOCH L. TAYLOR,	FANNIE SCHOFIELD,
WILLIAM BARNARD,	Alice E. HAMBLETON,	MARLOW B. LINTON,
JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,	JAMES TRUMAN,	THOMAS GARRETT,
RUTH DUGDALE,	MARY A. TRUMAN,	EDWARD WEBB,
ESERIUS BARNARD,	SIMON BARNARD,	WILLIAM WEBB,
ISAAC MEREDITH,	SARAH D. BARNARD,	ROWLAND JOHNSON,
	HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON,	

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NEW YORK:

JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER, 377 & 379 BROADWAY,  
CORNER OF WHITE STREET.

1858.

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### Address of the Clerks.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, *Hamorton, Chester Co., Pa.*  
OLIVER JOHNSON, *138 Nassau Street, New York.*  
SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, *Philadelphia.*

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## Minutes.

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THE PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING OF PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS convened in the Longwood meeting-house, in Chester County, on First-day, the 30th of Fifth month, 1858, at 10 o'clock, A. M. The crowd of people was so great as to fill the house to its utmost capacity, throng every place of access, and overflow the adjoining yard.

OLIVER JOHNSON briefly congratulated the Meeting upon the auspicious circumstances under which it had convened, upon the freedom of its platform, and its exemption from the bondage of creed and ecclesiastical authority. He expressed the hope that, however widely those present might differ from one another on minor matters, they would all see eye to eye in regard to fundamental principles, and that the Meeting might be characterized at once by great boldness in the utterance of truth, by a kind and fraternal spirit in all its discussions, and by that deep religious earnestness which comes of faith in God as the Father of the whole human race, and in his purposes of love to all his children.

HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON then read the Call of the Meeting, as follows :

THE SIXTH YEARLY MEETING OF THE PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS OF PENNSYLVANIA will convene at LONGWOOD (near Hamorton), Chester County, on First-day, the 30th of Fifth month, 1858, at 10 o'clock, A. M., and continue its sessions probably, for three or four successive days.

The principles and aims of this Religious Society have been so often set forth, that little need be said upon the subject in this connection. Suffice it to say, that it is our desire to secure the advantages of mutual coöperation and associated effort in the development of the religious life, without trenching, in the smallest degree, upon individual freedom of opinion and action ; that we are diligently striving to free ourselves, more and more, from the fetters of superstition, the tyranny of priesthood, and the bondage of creeds and forms, and to assume the prerogatives of a divinely inspired manhood ; that in our assemblies, avoiding "doubtful disputations" and wordy "strifes of doctrine," it is our aim to cultivate the spirit of love and good-will, to aid one another in the search for truth, to testify, from time to

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time, as occasion may require, against every form of organized wrong and popular wickedness, to apply the principles of justice and morality so impressively taught and exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth to every institution, custom and law of men, however sanctioned by authority or made venerable by time.

The friends of Truth, Purity and Progress, however named or nameless, are cordially invited to aid us by their presence and co-operation.

OLIVER JOHNSON,  
HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON,  
JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,  
WILLIAM BARNARD,  
ISAAC MENDENHALL,  
JAMES C. JACKSON,  
JOSIAH WILSON,  
AMELIA JACKSON,  
ALLEN AGNEW,  
THOMAS WHITSON,  
THOMAS GARRETT,  
JAMES W. GAWTHROP,  
SUSANNA P. CHAMBERS,  
MARY H. ENTRIKEN,  
RUTH DUGDALE,

JOHN AGNEW,  
EUSEBIUS BARNARD,  
PHILENA HEALD,  
ANNA R. COX,  
PRISCILLA GAWTHROP,  
PETER WILSON,  
HENRY M. SMITH,  
AGNES SANDERS,  
JOHN G. JACKSON,  
MARY P. WILSON,  
ENOCH P. WICKERSHAM,  
SAMUEL PENNOCK,  
DINAH MENDENHALL,  
ELIZA AGNEW,  
LYDIA PRICE,  
JOHN WILLIAM COX.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE remarked, that Progressive Friends have no system of dogmatic theology, and no sacred books which they receive as authority, but that they accept what is good and true, wherever found. He then read the following appropriate and impressive passages from the Hindoo Vedas, from the works of Confucius, the Zend Avesta of the Persians, the Koran, and the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

#### FROM THE VEDAS OF THE HINDOOS.

There is one living and true God ; everlasting, without parts or passion ; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things.

The vulgar look for their gods in water ; the ignorant think they reside in wood, bricks, and stones ; men of more extended knowledge seek them in celestial orbs ; but wise men worship the Universal Soul.

There is nothing desirable except the science of God. Out of this there is no tranquillity and no freedom.

The sacrifice of a thousand horses has been put in the balance with one true word, and the one true word weighed down the thousand sacrifices.

No virtue surpasses that of veracity. It is by truth alone that men attain to the highest mansions of bliss. Men faithless to the truth, however much they may seek supreme happiness, will not obtain it, even though they offer a thousand sacrifices. There are two roads which conduct to perfect virtue ; to be true, and to do no evil to any creature.

### FROM THE WORKS OF CONFUCIUS.

The firmament is the most glorious work produced by the Great First Cause.

What is called reason is properly an attribute of Tien, the Supreme God. The light which he communicates to men is a participation of this reason. What is called reason in Tien is virtue in man, and when reduced to practice is called justice.

To think that we have virtue, is to have very little of it. Wisdom consists in being very humble, as if we were incapable of any thing, yet ardent, as if we could do all.

When thou art in the secret places of thy house, do not say, none sees me, for there is an Intelligent Spirit who seeth all. The Supreme pierces into the recesses of the heart, as light penetrates into a dark room. We must endeavor to be in harmony with his light, like a musical instrument perfectly attuned.

Mankind, overwhelmed with afflictions, seem to doubt of Providence, but when the hour of executing His decrees shall come, none can resist Him. He will then show that when He punished he was just and good, and that He was never actuated by vengeance or hatred.

How vast is the power of spirits ! An ocean of invisible Intelligences surround us everywhere. If you look for them, you cannot see them. If you listen, you cannot hear them. Identified with the substance of all things, they cannot be separated from it.

He who knows right principles is not equal to him who loves them.

### FROM THE ZEND AVESTA OF THE PERSIANS.

Treat old age with reverence and tenderness.

To refuse hospitality, and not succor the poor, are sins.

The heavens are a point from the pen of God's perfection. The world is a bud from the bower of His beauty. The sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom, and the sky is a bubble on the sea of His power. His beauty is free from a spot of sin, hidden in a thick veil of darkness. He made mirrors of the atoms of the world, and threw the reflection from His own face on every atom.

### FROM THE KORAN.

One hour of equity is better than seventy years of devotion.

God hath commanded that ye worship no one beside Him.

God is the light of the heavens and the earth. His wisdom is a light on the wall, in which burns a lamp covered with glass ; the glass shines like a star ; the lamp is lit with the oil of a blessed tree—no eastern, no western oil—it burns for whoever seeks light.

### FROM THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES.

Learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed ; judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek : he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.  
The trees of the Lord are full of sap : the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches.

#### FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.

And there was strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest, and he (Jesus) said unto them :

The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise lordship over them are called Benefactors.

But ye shall not be so : but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them : and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them.

THEODORE PARKER then offered a very impressive prayer, after which he proceeded to deliver a discourse " Of the Progressive Development of the Conception of God in the Books of the Bible," which commanded the fixed and earnest attention of the whole assembly. The discourse will be found in another part of this pamphlet.

The multitude outside the house was addressed by CHARLES C. BURLEIGH.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

WILLIAM BARNARD, JOHN G. JACKSON, ISAAC MENDENHALL, SUSANNA P. CHAMBERS, RUTH DUGDALE, ELIZABETH COATES, and SALLIE W. COATES, were appointed a Committee to nominate Clerks for the ensuing year.

JOSIAH WILSON, ISAAC S. FLINT, THOMAS GARRETT, THOMAS HAMBLETON, EDWARD WEBB, SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, DINAH MENDENHALL and SUSAN F. PEIRCE, were appointed a Committee to settle with the Treasurer, report the state of the finances, and nominate a Treasurer for the ensuing year.

The following persons were appointed a Committee, to prepare Testimonies on various subjects of Reform, for the consideration of the Meeting, viz: CHARLES C. BURLEIGH, SIMON BARNARD, ALFRED H. LOVE, HENRY M. SMITH, MARY CHACE, OLIVER JOHNSON, ISAAC MEREDITH, DINAH MENDENHALL, MARY L. BARNARD, HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON, RUTH DUGDALE, SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, SARAH H. HALLOCK, EDWIN H. COATES, ROBERT HENRY LAMBORN, GRACEANNA LEWIS, MARY L. BARNARD, SARAH GIBSON, WILLIAM MERRITT, SIMPSON PRESTON, WILLIAM H. SNOWDON, SUSAN F. PEIRCE, JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, RACHEL TOWNSEND, WILLIAM LLOYD, DEBORAH PENNOCK, WILLIAM BARNARD, ANDREW J. DAVIS, MARY F. DAVIS.

The following persons were appointed a Committee on Correspondence, viz: JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON, ELIZABETH JACKSON, JOSIAH WILSON, MARY P. THORN, ALLEN AGNEW, MARY F. SMITH, CHANDLER DARLINGTON, PHEBE PRESTON, ROBERT LAMBORN.

THEODORE PARKER then delivered an impressive discourse "Of the Ecclesiastical Conception of God, and its Relation to the Scientific and Religious Wants of the Age." This discourse will be found in another part of this pamphlet.

The multitude outside the house, which had greatly increased since the morning session, was addressed by CHARLES C. BURLEIGH, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, EDWIN H. COATES, JOSIAH BOND, and AMOS GILBERT. The orderly deportment of the people, and the close attention paid to the remarks of the speakers, evinced a hearty interest in the principles and purposes of Progressive Friends.

## SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE read, as peculiarly appropriate to the occasion, the following poem; at the same time expressing his regret that it could not be sung.

### A HYMN OF THE BATTLE.

BY THOMAS L. HARRIS.

Can ye lengthen the hours of the dying Night,  
Or chain the wings of the Morning Light?  
Can ye seal the wings of the Ocean deep,  
Or bind the Thunders in silent sleep?  
The Sun that rises, the Seas that flow,  
The Thunders of Heaven, all answer, "No!"

Can ye drive young Spring from the blossomed earth ?  
The Earthquake still in its awful birth ?

Will the hand on Time's dial backward flee,  
Or the pulse of the Universe pause for thee ?

The shaken Mountains, the Flowers that blow,  
The pulse of the Universe, answer, "No!"

Can ye burn a Truth in the Martyr's fire,  
Or chain a Thought in the dungeon dire ;

Or slay the Soul, when it soars away  
In glorious life from the mouldering clay ?

The Truth that liveth, the Thoughts that go,  
The Spirit ascending, all answer, "No!"

Oh, Priest ! Oh, Despot ! your doom they speak :  
For God is mighty as ye are weak.

Your Night and Winter from earth must roll ;  
Your chains must melt from the limb and soul.

Ye have wrought us wrong, ye have wrought us wo—  
Shall ye triumph longer ? we answer, "No!"

Ye have builded your temples, with gems impeared,  
On the broken heart of a famished world ;

Ye have crushed its heroes in desert graves,  
Ye have made its children a race of slaves :

O'er the Future Age shall the ruin go ?  
We gather against thee, and answer, "No!"

Ye laugh in scorn from your shrines and towers,  
But weak are ye, for the truth is ours.

In arms, in gold, and in pride ye move,  
But we are stronger; our strength is love.

Slay Truth and Love with a curse and blow ?  
The beautiful Heavens ! they answer, "No!"

The Winter Night of the world is past ;  
The Day of Humanity dawns at last ;

The veil is rent from the Soul's calm eyes,  
And Prophets and Heroes and Seers arise ;

Their words and deeds like the thunders go :  
Can ye stifle their voices ? they answer, "No!"

It is God who speaks in their words of might !

It is God who acts in their deeds of right !

Lo ! Eden waits like a radiant bride—

Humanity springeth elate to her side :

Can ye sever the twain who to Oneness flow ?  
The voice of Divinity answers, "No!"

JOHN G. JACKSON, from the Committee on the nomination of Clerks, submitted a report, recommending the appointment of JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, OLIVER JOHNSON, and SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS. The recommendation was approved, and they were appointed accordingly.

Epistles were received from the Waterloo (N. Y.), North Collins (N. Y.), and Michigan Yearly Meetings of Friends of Human Progress, and from a Meeting of Progressive Friends, lately held at Wayne, Ashtabula County, Ohio. The spirit of these communications, and the noble sentiments they conveyed, made them peculiarly welcome. They also afforded cheering evidence of the progress of the cause in which we are engaged.

From the Ohio Yearly Meeting no communication was received.

A letter from M. E. GODDARD, of South Reading, Vt., was read, enclosing a Call for a Convention of Friends of Human Progress, to be held at Rutland, in the same State, on the 25th, 26th, and 27th of Sixth month, 1858. This Call, signed by more than one hundred and fifty men and women, was addressed to "all philanthropists and reformers, in and out of the State;" to "friends of free thought," "men of all religious creeds, and men of no creed," earnestly inviting them to come and "take counsel together on the great topics of reform." The letter and Call were referred to the Committee of Correspondence, with instructions to prepare a suitable communication to be sent to the Convention in behalf of this body.

Letters of a cheering character were also received from the following persons, viz:—

CHARLES K. WHIPPLE,  
SAMUEL MAY, JR.  
THOMAS J. MUMFORD,  
JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS,  
DAVID PRINCE,  
WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON,  
CHARLES D. B. MILLS,

THOMAS W. HIGGINSON,  
JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,  
WILLIAM H. FISH,  
AARON M. POWELL,  
HENRY CHARLES,  
PLINY SMITH,  
JEMIMA WEBSTER.

Cheered by the noble sentiments, and grateful for the admonitions conveyed in these letters, the Meeting directed the Clerks to send to each of the writers a copy of our proceedings. The letters were referred to the Revising Committee, to be published in full or in part, as they may deem best.

THEODORE PARKER then delivered a discourse "Of the Natural

or Philosophical Idea of God, and its Relation to the Scientific and Religious Wants of the Age." This discourse will be found in another part of this pamphlet.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

**EDWARD WEBB**, from the Committee on Finance, presented a Report, showing the whole amount received in the past year from contributions and sales of pamphlets to be \$253 23; the expenditures \$246 29; balance in the treasury \$6 94. The Committee recommended the appointment of **ISAAC MENDENHALL** as Treasurer for the ensuing year, and he was appointed accordingly. The Meeting then proceeded to take contributions to defray the expenses of the current year. The amount of payments and subscriptions was \$284 06

**THEODORE PARKER** then delivered a sublime and deeply-affecting discourse "Of the Soul's Normal Delight in the Infinite God." He was listened to with heartfelt pleasure by a crowded audience. The discourse is printed in this pamphlet.

The Committee on Education, appointed two years ago, submitted the following Report, which, after brief remarks by **, was accepted.**

#### REPORT ON EDUCATION.

The Committee to whom was referred the subject of Education, report:

That they have been unable to make any arrangements for the organization of a Seminary of Learning; partly in consequence of the general derangement of financial affairs during the past year, and partly from a diversity of opinion as to the most feasible plan.

A part of the Committee were in favor of a large Institution, embracing the greatest possible variety of studies. Others thought it would be better to establish a School for instruction in the English branches only, with especial reference to the wants of common life. They agreed that the boarding department should be so arranged as to preserve the family relations and character, sufficiently to secure the pupils from those immoral influences and violations of physiological laws, which so frequently undermine the moral purity and the physical health of the students in our Colleges and Universities.

The Committee submit the subject to the Yearly Meeting, as one of the most important that can possibly engage its attention.

On behalf of the Committee,

H. M. DARLINGTON,  
AARON MENDENHALL,  
ALICE JACKSON,  
JOSIAH WILSON.

The Committee appointed last year "to make arrangements for holding meetings in different places, as way may open, to advance the Testimonies of this Religious Society, especially those in relation to Slavery and Intemperance," submitted the following report:

#### TO THE YEARLY MEETING.

The Committee who were authorized by the Society to make arrangements for holding meetings in various localities, to advance the testimonies of Truth, report: That we entered very soon upon the duties assigned us, and more than realized our expectations in finding the way open for our reception. A considerable portion of the meetings appointed by the Committee were attended by overflowing numbers, who gave us kind and courteous audience. In several instances persons of other religious societies participated acceptably in the services of the Conventions. We found a much wider field for service than we were able to occupy. Many invitations were received, with which it was impracticable for us to comply. The Committee acknowledge with gratitude that the little service they were enabled to perform and the opportunity afforded for mingling with earnest and sincere minds in the mutual effort for the promulgation of a natural and anti-sectarian religion, has at least tended to promote our own spiritual strength and encouragement.

The following is a list of the meetings, held by us, viz.:

- 1st. A meeting in the woods near Marshalton, Chester Co.
- 2d. In Friends' meeting-house at Oxford, " "
- 3d. In a grove near Christiana, Lancaster Co., Pa.
- 4th. A series of four meetings in the city of Harrisburg, one of them in the colored people's church, at their request.
- 5th. Two in the Welsh Church at Pearl Bottom, Lancaster Co., Pa.
- 6th. Two at Phoenixville, Chester Co.
- 7th. A series of four in Newtown, Bucks Co., in which they adopted an Exposition of Sentiments, and appointed a Committee to call future meetings.
- 8th. One in the Free meeting-house at East Britain.
- 9th. Two in the People's Hall at Eastland, Lancaster Co.
- 10th. One at Pleasant Grove Hall.
- 11th. One at Slate Ridge, Maryland.
- 12th. One at Orange, New Jersey.

In behalf of the Committee,

WILLIAM BARNARD,  
DINAH MENDENHALL,  
WILLIAM LLOYD,  
ESTHER HAYES.

The report was accepted, and the Committee were discharged.

EDWIN H. COATES proposed the appointment of a new Committee to promote the same objects during the ensuing year. After remarks by EDWIN H. COATES, ALFRED H. LOVE, WILLIAM BARNARD,

JOSIAH BOND, NATHANIEL BROWN, CHANDLER DARLINGTON, CALEB JACKSON, THOMAS CURTIS, J. A. DUGDALE, THOMAS HAMBLETON, REUBEN WEBB, OLIVER JOHNSON, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, AGNES COOK, REBECCA FUSSELL, and EDWARD WEBB, the Meeting voted to appoint a Committee to hold meetings, as way may open, to promote the anti-sectarian and reformatory principles of this Yearly Meeting, as set forth in its Exposition of Sentiments. THOMAS GARRETT, EDWIN H. COATES, SARAH H. HALLOCK, ELIZABETH T. ATKINSON, RACHEL TOWNSEND, HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON, ISAAC MENDENHALL, LUKENS PEIRCE, JOHN G. JACKSON, THOMAS H. HOPKINS, and AGNES COOK were requested to nominate a suitable Committee to carry out this object.

The Meeting was informed that an association in Philadelphia, calling itself "Congregational Friends of Truth," had appointed THOMAS CURTIS and H. B. ODIORNE its representatives to visit this body.

#### THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION.

The Committee appointed for the purpose reported forms of Testimony on various subjects, for the consideration of the Meeting. The Testimony against Slavery was read and adopted.

The Testimony against Caste was next considered. After an animated discussion, in which CHANDLER DARLINGTON, CALEB JACKSON, WILLIAM BARNARD, THOMAS HAMBLETON, OLIVER JOHNSON, THOMAS BORTON, ELI HAMBLETON, THOMAS CURTIS, JACOB L. PAXSON, EDWARD WEBB, ALICE ELIZA HAMBLETON, MARY F. DAVIS, ELI LOGAN, REBECCA FUSSELL, J. A. DUGDALE, JOHN WILSON, SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, AMOS GILBERT, DR. B. FUSSELL, EDWIN H. COATES, STEPHEN TAYLOR, JOHN G. JACKSON, CHARLES HAMBLETON, WILLIAM CHACE, and EUSEBIUS BARNARD took part, it was amended and adopted.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS spoke at considerable length upon "The Fraternity of Ideas," commanding the fixed attention of a crowded auditory.

The Testimony in favor of the Coëquality of Woman was next taken up. MARY F. DAVIS read an able discourse upon the Political and Legal Disabilities of Woman, after which the Testimony was adopted.

## FOURTH DAY—MORNING SESSION.

ALFRED H. LOVE, of Philadelphia, read an original poem, as follows :

**"LET THERE BE LIGHT!"**

When out of chaos, vast and wild,  
Creation burst—God's wondrous child—  
Deep darkness reigned throughout the land,  
Till forth there came the glad command—

Let there be Light!

Then fled the veil of gloom away,  
And with the flush of youth came day ;  
And from the bright sun hung on high,  
The joyous mandate seemed to fly—

Let there be Light!

And when his daily smiles were o'er,  
No darkness blinded as before ;  
O'er eastern hills the silv'ry moon  
Replaced the golden car of noon—

Let there be Light!

The new-made stars, the planets all,  
Came twinkling—twinkling at the call ;  
And with their laughing eyes replied,  
With hopeful beaming far and wide—

Let there be Light!

And now, as then, with power divine,  
These orbs of Heaven brightly shine ;  
From God proclaiming o'er the land,  
For some wise cause, that same command—

Let there be Light!

Oh, man! take heed, this language lives  
In every thing creation gives ;  
No life so poor, so mean, so small,  
But what the mind may read in all—

Let there be Light!

There's not a dew-drop gems the morn,  
No floweret in the wild-wood born,  
But what, examined, will unfold  
Some truth perchance till then untold—

Let there be Light!

In every sphere of life we move,  
In every thing we meet or love ;  
From break of day till midnight hour,  
There's something breathes that ruling power—

Let there be Light!

How full the blessings flow from Heaven,  
 For man's improvement kindly given ;  
 We see, we hear, we feel them all,  
 Yet seldom heed that gentle call,  
 Let there be Light !

Too oft contented so to live,  
 Receiving all, yet naught to give ;  
 Whiling away a world of bliss,  
 And of that mandate too remiss—  
 Let there be Light !

Above, around, beneath we find,  
 Myriads of lights to guide the mind ;  
 And deep within the heart's recess,  
 A sweet low whisper asks to bless—  
 Let there be Light !

Lamp of the soul ! a light divine—  
 Well trimmed with love, shall truly shine ;  
 Revere its teachings, guard the flame,  
 And then, as Heaven's orbs proclaim—  
 There will be Light !

Light for the captive ! light for the free !  
 For all the world true liberty ;  
 Mad war and angry strife shall cease,  
 And every fireside glow with peace—  
 Let there be Light !

That tyranny may lose command,  
 That slavery shall not curse the land ;  
 Reform and justice e'er accord,  
 In joyous greeting with the word—  
 Let there be Light !

'T will give us progress, love and truth,  
 Ennable age, inspire the youth ;  
 From mountain-top, to valley deep,  
 Like suns that blaze and stars that peep—  
 There will be Light !

An able and lucid paper on PUBLIC WORSHIP, forwarded to the Meeting by CHARLES K. WHIPPLE, of Boston, was read, and listened to with deep interest. After remarks by CALEB JACKSON, CHANDLER DARLINGTON, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, OLIVER JOHNSON, WILLIAM BARNARD, THOMAS CURTIS, and WILLIAM CHACE, it was referred to the Revising Committee, to be published, if practicable.

The Meeting proceeded to consider the Testimonies reported from

the Committee on that subject, taking first that against War. After a very spirited discussion, in which CHANDLER DARLINGTON, JOHN G. JACKSON, THOMAS WORRELL, JAMES C. JACKSON, THOMAS CURTIS, DR. B. FUSSELL, STEPHEN TAYLOR, WILLIAM CHACE, REBECCA FUSSELL, LEWIS MARSHALL, JOSIAH WILSON, JOHN VALENTINE, WILLIAM BARNARD, ESTHER HAYES, JOHN G. JACKSON, SIMPSON PRESTON, THOMAS GARRETT, OLIVER JOHNSON, EDWARD WEBB, ALFRED H. LOVE, AGNES COOK, JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, CALEB JACKSON, and SARAH T. PEARSON took part, it was adopted.

The Testimony on the Treatment of Criminals was adopted.

The Testimony on Temperance, after remarks by CALEB JACKSON, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, THOMAS CURTIS, EDWARD WEBB, DR. B. FUSSELL, and RUTH DUGDALE, was adopted.

The Testimony against Tobacco, and that on the subject of Education, were adopted.

The Testimony in relation to "The Great Revival" was next taken up. After remarks by CALEB JACKSON, CHANDLER DARLINGTON, OLIVER JOHNSON, THOMAS CURTIS, WILLIAM LLOYD, WILLIAM CHACE, REUBEN WEBB, CATHARINE H. DEUEL, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, THOMAS WORRELL, AGNES COOK, EDWARD WEBB, JOHN G. JACKSON, ESTHER HAYES, REBECCA FUSSELL, ALFRED H. LOVE, and SIMON BARNARD, it was adopted.

The Testimony against Sectarianism, after remarks by JOHN G. JACKSON and OLIVER JOHNSON, was adopted.

The Friends appointed on Second day to nominate a suitable Committee to labor, during the ensuing year, in holding meetings, as way may open, to promote the anti-sectarian and reformatory principles of this Yearly Meeting, recommended the appointment of the following persons, and they were appointed accordingly :

WILLIAM BARNARD,.....	Marlboro, Chester Co., Pa.
EUSEBIUS BARNARD,.....	Parkerville, Chester Co., Pa.
DINAH MENDENHALL,.....	Hamorton, Chester Co., Pa.
ISSAC MENDENHALL,.....	Hamorton, Chester Co., Pa.
JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,.....	Hamorton, Chester Co., Pa.
ELIJAH F. PENNYPACKER,.....	Phenixville, Chester Co., Pa.
GRACEANNA LEWIS,.....	Kimberton, Chester Co., Pa.
DR. BARTHOLOMEW FUSSELL,....	Kimberton, Chester Co., Pa.
SIMON BARNARD,.....	West Chester, Chester Co., Pa.
WILLIAM SHIELDS,.....	West Chester, Chester Co., Pa.
ALFRED H. LOVE,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.

THOMAS CURTIS,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
JOSIAH BOND,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
MARY SWEENEY,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
NATHANIEL BROWN,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
FRANCIS PARKER,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
WILLIAM INGRAM,.....	Philadelphia, Pa.
WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER,.....	Germantown, Pa.
EDWARD ROBERTS,.....	Lower Merion, Philadelphia Co., Pa.
THOMAS HOPKINS,.....	Perkiomen, Montgomery Co., Pa.
ABRAHAM HUNSICKER,.....	Perkiomen, Montgomery Co., Pa.
WILLIAM LLOYD,.....	Newtown, Bucks Co., Pa.
MAHLON B. LINTON,.....	Newtown, Bucks Co., Pa.
WILLIAM MORROW,.....	Newtown, Bucks Co., Pa.
AGNES SANDERS,.....	Harrisburg, Pa.
THOMAS WHITSON,.....	Christiana, Lancaster Co., Pa.
THOMAS GARRETT,.....	Wilmington, Delaware.
EDWARD WEBB,.....	Wilmington, Delaware.
ISAAC S. FLINT,.....	Wilmington, Delaware.
JOHN G. JACKSON,.....	Wilmington, Delaware.
EDWIN H. COATES,.....	Mullica Hill, New Jersey.
SARAH GIBSON,.....	Mullica Hill, New Jersey.
WILLIAM SNOWDON,.....	Mullica Hill, New Jersey.
JOHN W. HASELTON,.....	Mullica Hill, New Jersey.
ROWLAND JOHNSON,.....	Orange, New Jersey.
HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON,.....	Orange, New Jersey.
BENJAMIN RULON,.....	Swedesboro, New Jersey.
ALEXANDER BLACK,.....	Swedesboro, New Jersey.
PHILIP D. MOORE,.....	Newark, New Jersey.
DANIEL COLLINS,.....	Atlantic City, New Jersey.
JOHN JEWITT,.....	Harrisonville, New Jersey.
OLIVER JOHNSON,.....	138 Nassau Street, New York.
DR. ROBERT T. HALLOCK,.....	New York.
HENRY M. SMITH,.....	New York.
STEPHEN H. ARCHER,.....	Dobb's Ferry, Westchester Co., New York.
JOHN C. FERGUSON,.....	Pleasantville, Westchester Co., New York.
SARAH H. HALLOCK,.....	Milton, Ulster Co., New York.
WILLIAM H. FISH,.....	Cortland, Cortland Co., New York.
ROBERT HILLIS,.....	Mount Union, Stark Co., Ohio.
ANN SHREVE,.....	Massilon, Stark Co., Ohio.
BENJAMIN S. JONES,.....	Salem, Columbiana Co., Ohio.
JOSEPHINE S. GRIFFING,.....	Salem, Columbiana Co., Ohio.
AGNES COOK,.....	Richmond, Wayne Co., Indiana.
ROBERT UNDERWOOD,.....	Richmond, Wayne Co., Indiana.
ANN DENTON CRIDGE,.....	Richmond, Wayne Co., Indiana.
THOMAS GRAY,.....	Camden, Indiana.
HIRAM GREGG,.....	Camden, Indiana.

SETH HINSHAW,.....Greensboro, Indiana.  
 ELDER SMITH,.....Dublin, Indiana.  
 THOMAS HUNT,.....Dublin, Indiana.  
 JONATHAN SWAYNE,.....Cottage Grove, Indiana.  
 DR. SUMNER STEBBINS,.....Mount Pleasant, Iowa.  
 JACOB T. STERN,.....Crescent City, Pottawattomie Co., Iowa.

ALFRED H. LOVE and WILLIAM LLOYD presented papers on the subject of Property and Land Monopoly, which, after being read, were referred to a Committee, with instructions to report on the subject next year. The Committee are ALFRED H. LOVE, WILLIAM LLOYD, THOMAS GARRETT, JOHN WILSON, JACOB L. PAXSON.

The Clerks announced that they had requested the following friends to assist in revising and publishing the Proceedings of the Meeting, and to unite with them in issuing the Call for the Meeting next year, viz : ELIZABETH JACKSON, FRANK DARLINGTON, EDWARD WEBB, THOMAS GARRETT, PRISCILLA GAWTHROP, JOHN G. JACKSON, MARY F. SMITH, WILLIAM BARNARD, ALICE JACKSON, SIMMONS COATES, SARAH H. HALLOCK, JOSIAH JACKSON, HENRY M. SMITH, HENRIETTA W. JOHNSON, MARY P. WILSON, LYDIA COX, JAMES T. GAWTHROP, REBECCA FUSSELL, ELIZA AGNEW.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, from the Committee of Correspondence, presented a General Epistle, which was adopted and directed to be signed by the Clerks, and forwarded to such Meetings as are known to be kindred in sentiment and purpose to this.

MARY F. DAVIS made a few appropriate and touching remarks, after which the concluding minute was read, as follows :

We close our Sixth Annual Convocation under a deep sense of gratitude to the Author of our being, for the opportunity afforded us of being once more "of one accord in one place," of engaging in the discussion of great practical and humanitarian questions, of helping one another in the search for truth, of testifying against popular wickedness, and lifting up the standard of reform, and of cultivating among ourselves the spirit of love and good-will; and we separate with renewed confidence in the anti-sectarian principles of our Association, a more lively faith in their ultimate triumph, and a firm resolve to use our utmost endeavors to advance the cause of truth and righteousness.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,  
 OLIVER JOHNSON,  
 SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, } *Clerks.*

## EXPOSITION OF SENTIMENTS.

ADOPTED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING OF  
PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS.

*To the Friends of Pure and Undefiled Religion, and to all Seekers after Truth, of whatever name or denomination, the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends sendeth Greeting :*

DEAR FRIENDS:—Having been led, as we trust, through obedience to the revelations of truth, to form a Religious Association upon principles always too little regarded and often trampled under foot by professing Christians and popular sects, we are constrained to address you in explanation of our leading sentiments, purposes, plans, and hopes. If, as we believe, the basis of our organization, and the arrangements we propose for the culture of man's religious powers, are in harmony with the Divine laws, and adapted to the wants of human nature and the demands of the present age, it is certainly incumbent upon us to diffuse the knowledge thereof as widely as possible; and if, on the other hand, “the light that is in us be darkness,” it is proper that we should invoke your earnest efforts to redeem us from our errors, and turn our feet into the highway of holiness and truth. We, therefore, ask your serious and unprejudiced consideration of the matters presented in this Exposition, so that, whether you shall accept or reject our propositions, your conclusions may minister to your own peace of mind and growth in the love and practice of the truth.

In our efforts to apply the principles of Christianity to daily life, and to social customs and institutions which we deemed subversive of individual and national morality, as well as in conflict with the laws of God, we encountered the hostility of the popular sects, to one or another of which most of us belonged, and to which we were bound by ties that grew with our growth and strengthened with our strength.

Mingling with the chime of church bells and with the tones of the preacher's voice, or breaking upon the stillness of our religious assemblies, we heard the clank of the slave's chain, the groans of the wounded and dying on the field of bloody strife, the noise of drunken revelry, the sad cry of the widow and the fatherless, and the wail of homeless, despairing poverty, driven

"By foul Oppression's ruffian glut~~may~~  
Forth from life's plenteous feast;"

and when, in obedience to the voice of God, speaking through the holiest sympathies and purest impulses of our Godlike humanity, we sought to arouse our countrymen to united efforts for the relief of human suffering, the removal of giant wrongs, the suppression of foul iniquities, we found the Church, in spite of her solemn professions, arrayed against us, blocking up the path of reform with her serried ranks, prostituting her mighty influence to the support of wickedness in high places, smiling complacently upon the haughty oppressor, "justifying the wicked for a reward," maligning the faithful Abdiels who dared to stand up for the truth and to testify against popular crimes—thus traitorously upsetting the very foundations of the Religion she was sacredly bound to support and exemplify, and doing in the name of Christ deeds at which humanity shuddered, obliterating her indignant blushes only with the tears that welled up from the deeps of her great, loving heart.

For a time, though not without deep mortification and discouragement, we bore this appalling delinquency, thinking in our short-sightedness that it was mainly the result of a temporary mistake, and not of an incurable leprosy tainting the whole body. In the "patience of hope" we toiled on, seeking to reform alike the Church and the world, and deeming it certain that the former would speedily abandon her false and sinful position, and "come up to the help of the Lord" against the hosts of unrighteousness and oppression. Our hopes in this respect were doomed to a sad and bitter disappointment. The leaders of the Church, instead of retracing the false step which they had taken, grew more and more hostile to the cause of Christian Reform, while there was not found in the body enough of moral principle to reject their counsels and repudiate their impious claims to a Divine warrant for their criminal apostacy. Inflated with spiritual pride, and claiming to be the anointed expounders of God's will, they mocked at Philanthropy as no part of religion, exalted in its place the Dagon of man-made Disciplines,

pious, becomes silent if not acquiescent, and mayhap lays his reason and common sense a sacrifice on the altar of the Church. Poor man! let him be once fairly convinced that ecclesiastical bodies, however sacred their professions, however worthy of esteem within their legitimate sphere, are yet only *human*, and without authority to bind the conscience even of the humblest of God's children, and he will no longer dare to offer such a sacrifice, to dishonor his Creator by debasing his own exalted powers.

It would be easy to show that this claim of supernatural power, on the part of the organized Church, is at war with the whole genius and spirit of Christianity as exhibited in the life and teachings of Jesus, and without warrant in the writings of the Apostles and primitive Christians, as well as subversive of individual rights and responsibilities. Jesus nowhere indicated an intention to organize a Church clothed with such power. Indeed, it does not appear from his recorded words that he even contemplated any organization whatever of those who should embrace his doctrines. He specified no such work as incumbent upon those whom he sent forth as witnesses of the truth, but left them to adopt such instrumentalities as might seem to them adapted to promote the object of their mission. The Apostles did indeed organize Churches, but they did not pretend that they were framed after a Divinely prescribed pattern, still less that they were clothed with a supernatural power. "It was not," says a learned writer,\* "until the number of personal followers of Jesus increased by thousands, and *the need of some organization began to be felt*, that any thing like the institution of a distinct and permanent religious society appears to have been definitely contemplated. And then *nothing more was done, than was necessary to that present exigency*. Thus the whole institution of the Church at Jerusalem grew up by degrees, *as one step after another was called for by a succession of circumstances altogether peculiar.*" A religious periodical of high authority in matters of ecclesiastical history, † testified, some years since, as follows: "Men have clung as with a dying grasp to a few shreds of ancient tradition, and deemed it sacrilege to meddle with these consecrated relics. They have attached a peculiar sacredness to their own constitutions, councils, ordinances, creeds and decisions, as if they rested on Divine right and apostolic authority.... The beautiful theories of Church government, devised with so much care and put together with so much skill and art, have, we are sure, no manner of resemblance to the

\* Leonard Bacon, in his "Manual for Young Church Members."

† *The Christian Spectator*, Sept., 1833.

Churches mentioned in the Acts and Epistles. The primitive Christians, could they come among us, would be not a little surprised to hear their assemblies, gathered by stealth for worship, with or without particular standing officers, referred to as the models after which the superstructure of denominational Churches is supposed to be fashioned. They were simple-hearted men and women, exposed to continual persecution; and bound together in Christian love; forming and modifying their regulations *exactly as was needed*; never once dreaming that they or their successors were bound to a single system by some great code, provided by Divine authority.... The reason of associating together was, to further this great end, mutually to enliven the feelings of devotion, strengthen the principles of piety, and aid in, and urge to, the discharge of duty.... Some things were practised in some Churches and not in others. Some officers existed in one and not in another; some met in one place and not in another; and *all had a right to do whatever might be conducive to the general good.*"

We have dwelt at some length on this point, because we deem it of fundamental importance. This claim of organic communion with God lies at the root of many evils in the Churches around us, and hence we desire to make our denial of its validity as emphatic as possible. We would impress upon the minds of all whom our voice may reach, the truth, that there is no mysterious alchemy whereby a company of men, mean and selfish as individuals, are transmuted into a holy body; no Divine afflatus vouchsafed to them in the mass, superseding the necessity of personal conformity to the will of God. Such a claim is the acme of superstition and imposture. It is amazing that it should for so long a period have deceived and befooled the nations! When will the people learn that there is nothing Divine, nothing too sacred for investigation, in the artificial arrangements and prescribed formalities of sects? Alas! what multitudes join the popular Churches, submitting to their rites and paying the expenses of their administration, deluding themselves meanwhile with the idea that they are thus ensuring their eternal salvation, even though their daily lives are defiled by sordid and debasing acts, and they scarcely lift a finger or breathe one honest aspiration for their own or the world's moral improvement!

Our inquiries into the nature and uses of Religious Organization have also brought us to the conclusion, that the Churches around us have made a vital mistake in demanding uniformity of belief in respect to scholastic theology, ordinances, rites and forms, as a condition of religious fellowship and the basis of associated effort. It would hardly be

possible to exaggerate the evils resulting from this mistake. It has led the Church into dissensions, hypocrisy and all uncharitableness, and instead of promoting a manly, vigorous and healthful piety, which ever manifests itself in works of practical benevolence and would make her a burning and a shining light in the presence of surrounding darkness, it narrows the scope of her vision, dwarfs the intellect, smothers the heart, and makes her the purveyor of traditions and shams, a covert for meanness and treachery, and a hiding-place for the perpetrators and apologists of popular wickedness. It reverses the arrangements proposed by Jesus and his early followers, putting that first which should be last, the incidental in place of the primary, the temporary in place of the eternal. Jesus enjoins it upon his hearers to "seek *first* the kingdom of God and His *righteousness* ;" but the popular Church practically tells us, on pain of eternal perdition, to seek first of all the *theology* of that kingdom, assuring us, with impious tongue, that if we only master that, get its different parts properly arranged and labelled, and learn to believe them, however inconsistent with each other, and contrary to our reason and common sense, the *righteousness* may safely enough be left to take care of itself! Instead of requiring as the evidence of our piety the "fruits" demanded in the Gospel of Jesus, it sneers at "good works" as "carnal" and ineffectual, bids us mind our catechisms, disciplines and confessions of faith ; to come regularly to its assemblies, and worship according to its prescribed forms ! It is no wonder that politicians, bent upon schemes of selfish aggrandizement, mock at the Higher Law, and declare their own oppressive statutes a finality, when the Church is found thus corrupt and apostate. No marvel that insatiate Wealth tramples upon lowly Poverty ; that War's "red thunders" reverberate round the world ; that Drunkenness counts its victims by tens of thousands ; that Land Monopoly grinds humanity in the dust ; that Lust is doing his work of defilement and shame with impunity ; that immortal beings are driven to their daily toil under the lash, and even sold in the shambles, when the Church proffers **absolution** for such crimes upon terms so easy of fulfilment.

The natural counterpart of this false and superstitious devotion to creeds and forms is an unnatural sourness and melancholy—a Pharisaical spirit, which frowns upon amusements as an offence to God, and which would cover the face of society with a sanctimonious gloom as repugnant to Religion as to unperverted human nature. The victims of this spirit converse about religion, not in manly and natural tones, indicative of sincerity and earnestness, but in a whining, canting man-

ner, as if it were a burden hard to be borne, but which they reluctantly consent to carry during their mortal life, as the only means of eternal salvation! We are persuaded that the exhibitions of this spirit on the part of the Church have produced incalculable mischief, by exciting the prejudices of the young against *all Religion* as necessarily of an ascetic character, and by placing amusements beyond the pale of Christian influence, thus making them liable to excesses which might otherwise be avoided. The Christian, of all other persons, should not be of a sad countenance, but ever cheerful and hopeful in his demeanor, making the very atmosphere he breathes a witness of the serene joy that dwells in his heart. No false idea of sanctity, no superstitious or fanatical "worry" about his soul, should he ever suffer to make his presence distasteful and unwelcome to the young.

We cannot undertake to particularize all the errors of principle and practice in the popular Churches, which our investigations have revealed to us; but there is one more which we must not pass in silence. We allude to that vicious and despotic feature in the organization of most of them, which, beginning in the subordination of the individual to the local Church, or to Elders, Overseers, or other officers thereof, ends in the subjection of local bodies to some larger assembly or central power. There are, indeed, some Churches which have attempted to abolish this system, but they are still too much bound by usage to practices inconsistent with their theories. Experience, as well as observation, has taught us that local organizations should in the first place be formed upon principles which will offer the best possible safeguard to the equal rights of the individual members, and discourage tyranny, whether of the many or the few; and, in the next place, that they should never allow any other body, however numerous or imposing, to exercise authority over them. The forms of Church organization, instead of being such as are suggested by the ideas of individual freedom and responsibility which pervade the teachings of Jesus, would seem to have been borrowed from anti-Christian and despotic systems of civil government, whereof force is the vital and controlling element. Under such forms, religious tyranny, always difficult of repression, is sure to spring up into a vigorous life. It would be easy to illustrate this truth by a reference to the history of any of those Churches in which the affiliated and subordinating system of government prevails, but the experience of many of our number naturally leads us to point to the Society of Friends as a warning against this lamentable evil. The setting apart of ministers as a distinct order of persons, and for life; the appointment of Elders to sit

in judgment upon the services of the Ministry, and to determine officially what is and what is not inspiration; the subjection of individual liberty to official dictation; the subordination of Preparative to Monthly, of Monthly to Quarterly, of Quarterly to Yearly Meetings; all this affords a covert for despotic authority. It is an arrangement whereby the few are enabled to control the many, and to carry into successful operation their plans for keeping the Church popular with the world, while she is trampling upon her own most vital principles, and obstinately refusing to do the work for which she was originally established. It aggravates, moreover, all the other evils which have crept into the body, and renders the work of reform extremely difficult, if not impossible.

But while we thus earnestly deny the claims of Religious Associations to Divine authority, and maintain that they form no exception to the rule, that "institutions are made for man, not man for institutions," and while we would fearlessly expose all that is wrong in existing Churches, we do not therefore repudiate such associations as necessarily evil. Founded upon right principles, adjusted to the wants of our social nature, within their legitimate sphere as the servants and helpers, not the masters of the soul, as a means and not an end, we esteem them of great importance. It is only when they interpose between our consciences and God, assuming to tell us authoritatively how much and what we must believe, and virtually trampling under foot the right of private judgment, that our manhood prompts us to reject them. The mistakes which men have made in their efforts to realize the benefits of Religious Association, however strange and even preposterous they may appear to us at this advanced period of the world's history, were only the incidents of Humanity imperfectly informed and developed. They should not therefore discourage us, still less lead us into other errors at the opposite extreme. Men have also made great mistakes in science, and in things pertaining to physical life—in astronomy, chemistry, and the mechanic arts, and even in agriculture; and it would be no more absurd to urge these mistakes as a reason for abandoning all associated effort in such matters, than it would be to allege the similar blunders into which men have fallen in regard to Religion, and the abuses growing out of them, as a reason why we should resist the strong impulse of our nature which prompts us to combine our efforts for the promotion of piety and good morals. Past errors and present imperfections, instead of affording an argument against organization, are only illustrations of its necessity, as a means whereby the strong may help the weak, the highly cultivated soul minister to the edification of those less enlightened;

and social influence become the aid and support of individual virtue. Beavers do not more naturally combine to build their habitations, than men and women, inspired by a common love of God and Humanity, and a common thirst for religious excellence, mingle and combine their individual efforts for the promotion of pure and undefiled religion among themselves and throughout the world.

In forming *The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends*, we have followed the instincts of our moral and social nature, and acted upon the settled conviction, that such an organization was necessary to our highest efficiency in the work which our Heavenly Father has given us to do. We seek not to diminish, but to intensify, in ourselves the sense of individual responsibility—not to escape from duty, but to aid one another in its performance—to lift up before all who may be influenced by our words or actions a high standard of moral and religious excellence—to commit ourselves before the world as the friends of righteousness and truth, and as under the highest obligations to labor for the redemption of mankind from every form of error and sin.

It has been our honest endeavor to avoid, if possible, the mistakes into which previous organizations have so generally fallen, and especially those radical errors which are pointed out in this address. To this end we have made our association as simple as possible, having done little more than to provide for an annual assembly. We claim for this organization no other powers than such as we ourselves have conferred upon it in consistency with our own and others' individual freedom. We make no draft upon the veneration of our fellow-men for any arrangement that we have adopted, or may adopt hereafter. Veneration is due only to God, and to those eternal principles of Rectitude, Justice and Love, of which He is the embodiment.

We have set forth no forms nor ceremonies; nor have we sought to impose upon ourselves or others a system of doctrinal belief. Such matters we have left where Jesus left them, with the conscience and common sense of the individual. It has been our cherished purpose to restore the union between Religion and Life, and to place works of goodness and mercy far above theological speculations and scholastic subtleties of doctrine. Creed-making is not among the objects of our association. Christianity, as it presents itself to our minds, is too deep, too broad, and too high, to be brought within the cold propositions of the theologian. We should as soon think of bottling up the sunshine for the use of posterity, as of attempting to adjust the free and universal principles taught and exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth to the angles of

a man-made creed. Churches which undertake this impious and non-practicable work doom themselves thereby to barrenness and death. Instead of being warmed and animated by that living faith which "works by love" and overcomes the world, they lapse into bigotry and intolerance, and their formularies, having no life in themselves, become at length mere petrifications, fossil remains of ideas, which, however significant once, have no longer any adaptation to the condition of the race. It is sad to behold a Church, with Christ's name upon its brow, turning away from the wells of immortal truth, and clinging with superstitious pertinacity and veneration to the shell of an ancient creed, or the letter of an ancient Discipline, from which the original soul long since took its flight; swift to frown upon the slightest departure from its forms and theories, but slow to utter a testimony against a popular sin; ever zealous in tithing "mint, anise and cummin," but heavy of step and slow of speech when the great interests of Humanity are at stake.

Our terms of membership are at once simple, practical and catholic. If we may be said to have a test, it is one which applies to the heart and the life, not to the head nor to any of its speculations. Our platform is broad as Humanity, and comprehensive as Truth. We interrogate no man as to his theological belief; we send no Committees to pry into the motives of those who may desire to share the benefits of our Association; but open the door to all who recognize the Equal Brotherhood of the Human Family, without regard to sex, color or condition, and who acknowledge the duty of defining and illustrating their faith in God, not by assent to a creed, but by lives of personal purity, and works of beneficence and charity to mankind. If, by any possibility, there should be found here and there a sincere inquirer after truth, who may not feel himself included in this invitation to membership, we shall still bid him welcome to our assemblies, and listen with patience to whatever his highest convictions may prompt him to offer. We do not seek to bind our Association together by external bands, nor by agreement in theological opinions. Identity of object, oneness of spirit in respect to the practical duties of life, the communion of soul with soul in a common love of the beautiful and true, and a common aspiration after moral excellence,—these are our bond of union; and when these shall die out in our hearts, nothing will remain to hold us together; and those who shall come after us will not be subjected to the trouble of tearing down a great ecclesiastical edifice, constructed by our hands, before they can make provision for the supply of their own religious wants.

The name of our Association is suggestive of its history and principles. As a sign of our adherence to the great moral testimonies which the Society of Friends has so long professed, as well as for historical reasons, we have adopted in part the name chosen by Fox, Penn, and other reformers of a past generation, for the Societies which they founded, and which, we regret to say, have in our day widely departed from the spirit and principles of those illustrious men. The term "*Progressive*" is intended as a recognition of the fact, that our knowledge of truth is limited, and as an indication of an honest purpose on our part to "go on unto perfection," and to avail ourselves from time to time of whatever new light may be shed upon our path. Our meetings are at present conducted very much like those of the Society of Friends, except that they are not ruled by Elders, and that we have among us no privileged class called Ministers. We welcome alike the word of exhortation, the voice of prayer, and the song of praise and thanksgiving, whichever may well up from the "inner fulness" of the devoted heart; and if at any time words shall be uttered that appear to us to savor not of life but of contention and speculation, while we may feel called upon to speak our own sentiments with freedom, we hope not to be found denying the liberty of speech to others. Some may fear that liberty so unrestricted may lead to disorder and confusion, but we are persuaded that gentleness and forbearance are more potent than official dictation, and that the instinctive sense of right and wrong, in the breast of even a misguided and obtrusive man, will afford the best safeguard of propriety and order in our assemblies.

As a Yearly Meeting, we disclaim all disciplinary authority, whether over individual members or local Associations. We shall, from time to time, declare our sentiments on such subjects as may demand our attention; but they will be armed with no other force than that which our moral influence may impart, or which may belong to the nature of truth when earnestly and honestly spoken. It will be our aim to cherish freedom of thought and speech, on every subject relating to man's highest welfare. In saying this, we have no mental reservations to mock the earnest seeker after truth. We have no thunderbolts to launch at those whose perceptions of truth lead them to different conclusions from those of the majority; no edicts of excommunication to scare the soul from its researches; no sanctimonious scowl to dart at him who carries the torch of free inquiry into the very holy of holies. We know of no question too sacred for examination, nor in respect to which human reason should yield to human authority, however ancient or venerable.

Our organization is formed upon such principles, that while the body will not be responsible for the acts of individuals, so, on the other hand, individuals and minorities may avoid responsibility for any acts of the body which they do not approve, by recording their votes against such acts, or, if they think the case demands it, by a protest. It will, moreover, be the right of any individual to withdraw from the Association at any moment, without being required to give reasons for so doing, and without being subjected to censure on the part of the meeting.

Believing that local Associations, similar in their principles and aims to ours, would meet the wants of multitudes at the present day, and that they would be likely to accomplish great good, we hope to see such established in every community where a sufficient number of persons are found ready for the work. The men and women who are engaged in the various moral reforms of the day, and who have become weary of the prevalent sectarianism, might, we believe, gain strength for their special labors by establishing regular meetings on the First day of the week, for mutual edification and improvement, for an interchange of the sympathies growing out of common pursuits and trials, and for the cultivation of their moral and religious powers. The principle of human fraternity would be thereby strengthened among them, and their children be preserved from many unhealthful influences, and prepared to meet the full responsibilities of life in a spirit becoming to the age in which their lot has been cast. Surely, these are objects worthy of our earnest thought and most careful attention. Our province is not that of iconoclasts alone. We must build as well as destroy. If there are evil institutions to be overthrown and pernicious customs to be uprooted, so also is there need of a new social fabric, of which righteousness and peace are to be the foundations. If there are vices to be done away, so also are there virtues to be promoted; if there are corrupt trees to be hewn down and cast into the fire, so also are there plants of godliness to be trained, and flowers of heavenly beauty and fragrance to be nurtured. And in this work we must help each other, not occasionally and incidentally alone, but regularly and systematically. The arrangements for meetings should in every case be adapted to the peculiar wants and tastes of the communities in which they are respectively held, care being taken to keep forms subordinate to works of practical goodness and beneficence. It is neither necessary nor desirable that one meeting should be an exact copy of another. Adhering closely to fundamental principles, there will still be scope for a variety of modes and forms.

The local Associations should do more than hold weekly meetings.

They should regard it a sacred duty to provide for the visitation and help of the poor in their respective neighborhoods, to lend their sympathy and encouragement to such as are borne down under heavy trials, and to afford prompt and efficient aid in every right effort for the promotion of Temperance, Peace, Anti-Slavery, Education, the Equal Rights of Woman, &c.; that thus the public may be convinced that the Religion they seek to diffuse and establish is not an aggregation of mysteries, abstractions, and unmeaning forms, but a Religion for practical, everyday use, whose natural tendency is to fructify the conscience, intensify the sense of moral responsibility, purify and ennable the aims of men, and thus to make society wiser, better, and happier. Such Associations, moreover, ought to regard it as their special function to cultivate and develope the religious sentiment among their members, and, so far as possible, in the community generally. For this purpose they would do well to establish libraries, in which the works of eminent anti-sectarian writers upon moral, ethical, and religious subjects might become accessible to all classes, especially to the young.

Such Associations would naturally communicate, by letter or otherwise, with the Yearly Meeting, each giving that body the results of its own peculiar experience, and receiving in return the experiences of others, with such suggestions as the Yearly Meeting, upon a careful comparison of the whole, may be qualified to make. The various Yearly Meetings may also strengthen one another's hands by fraternal correspondence and counsel; and thus, without ecclesiastical authority or domination on the part of any, the whole body of believers in practical Christianity throughout the country may be cemented together in Christian love, and prepared to labor in harmony for the redemption of mankind from every evil and false way, and for the establishment of universal righteousness, purity, and peace. A Church thus united would wield a moral power like that of the Apostles and immediate followers of Jesus, and the means by which it would conquer the world are those which an Apostle has described: "BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE, BY LONG-SUFFERING, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BY LOVE UNFEIGNED, BY THE ARMOR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ON THE RIGHT HAND AND ON THE LEFT."

Dear Friends! are these ideas of a Church Utopian? Are we dreamers and enthusiasts? or is the day foretold by ancient prophets and bards beginning to dawn upon our darkness and to light the dull horizon with its reviving rays? Are we always to walk amid shadows and shams? Do we not hear the voice of God speaking to us in the deep

silence of our souls, and uttering itself in the events that are passing before us, bidding us awake from our slumbers, to cast away our doubts, and purify ourselves for the work of building up a pure Christianity upon the earth? Are not the fields every where white unto the harvest? and are there not all around us men and women, whose hearts God hath touched with holy fire, and who stand ready to enlist with us in this glorious cause? Let us, then, not falter, nor hesitate. What if our numbers are few, and the hosts of superstition and sin stand before us in menacing array? What are their boasts to us, when we know that the truth we promulgate is "a part of the celestial machinery of God," and that, "whoso puts that machinery in gear for mankind hath the Almighty to turn his wheel?"

"O, brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;  
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;  
To worship rightly, is to love each other,  
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

"Follow with reverent steps the great example  
Of Him whose holy work was 'doing good';  
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,  
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

"Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangor  
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;  
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,  
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace."

Signed on behalf and by direction of the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, held at Old Kennett, Chester County, by adjournments, from the 22d to the 25th of Fifth Month, 1853.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, } Clerks.  
SIDNEY PEIRCE, }

Our friend, JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, being present with us, the truthful and luminous Exposition of Sentiments put forth by the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, recently held at "Old Kennett," Chester County, was presented and read. The magnitude and importance of the principles embraced, and their appropriateness to the present wants of society, were deeply felt; and this meeting earnestly recommends to its members their co-operation in the circulation of the document.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held in Waterloo, Seneca County, N. Y., from the 5th to the 7th of the Sixth month, inclusive, 1853.

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK, } Clerks.  
RHODA DE GARMY, }

## Testimonies.

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Assembled in our Sixth Annual Convocation, and taking into serious consideration the moral, intellectual, religious, social and political condition of our country, we are constrained, under an abiding sense of our responsibility as individuals, and our obligations as a Religious Society, to record and publish these Testimonies.

### I.—SLAVERY.

The holding of a human being as property, under whatsoever circumstances, we regard as a sin against God, and a crime against humanity. As there is not a bondman in the land who has not an inalienable right to be free, we can do no less than to demand that every chain be instantly sundered. In dealing with a sin of such magnitude—a sin by which millions of our fellow creatures are reduced to the condition of chattels, and covered with the dark pall of ignorance and degradation—we can give no place to the spirit of compromise. There is no hope for the country but in persistently and unceasingly applying to the consciences of the people the unqualified demands of justice and righteousness. To whisper half-truths at such a time as the present, is to “daub with untempered mortar,” and trifile with the most fearful responsibilities that ever weighed upon the conscience of a nation.

There is much in the history of the past year, as pertaining to this great subject, that is well calculated to excite a righteous indignation, and awaken our deepest solicitude. The Supreme Judicial tribunal of the country has proclaimed the atrocious doctrine, that persons of African descent (many of whom, it is well known, are children of men who shed their blood on the battle-fields of the Revolution, and participated in the organization of the State and National Governments) are not and cannot be citizens—that, in short, they have “no rights which white men are bound to respect.” This dogma is already incorporated in the platform of the party which bears sway in the councils of the nation; it shapes the legislation of Congress and the action of the Executive; while the only numerous political party which makes any pretension to anti-slavery, is declared by not a few of its champions to be not the advocate of equality for the blacks, but “the *white* man’s party,” thus interposing no effectual resistance to the tyrannous de-

cree. The President and his official advisers and agents have prostituted all their powers in the effort to establish slavery on the soil of Kansas, in opposition to the well-known wishes of her people; and an ingeniously contrived scheme, intended to effect this object, has been forced through Congress by Executive intimidation and political bribery. It should be added that not a few of the men, even at the North, who share the responsibility of this gigantic wickedness, hold a high rank in Churches, calling themselves Christian! While the leading and most powerful Despotism of the Old World is preparing to emancipate her millions of degraded serfs, the boasted "Model Republic" cherishes the system of chattel slavery, as if it were the most precious jewel in the crown of her glory. Despotic Russia breaks the fetters of her bondmen, but Republican America, with the declaration upon her lips that all men are endowed with an inalienable right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, dooms one-seventh of her population to the most degrading servitude, while not a few of the champions of this wickedness have the effrontery to propose that the foreign slave-trade, now branded as piracy by our laws, should be revived for the purpose of augmenting the number of their victims, and extending the system over territory as yet unpolluted by its presence.

If we turn to the popular Churches of the country, the prospect is no better; they still remain, as heretofore, "the bulwarks of slavery." Of the numerous sects which swarm in every part of the land, and which must be regarded as the exponents of its morality, there is not one that is *thoroughly* imbued with an anti-slavery spirit; not one whose garments are not stained with the blood of the slave. Even those whose organic law is opposed to the system, fail to live up to the principles they profess, and by their connivance or non-action strengthen the hands of the slave-holder. The American Tract Society, the organ and representative of the great "evangelical" denominations, and which professes to have for its object, the promotion of "vital godliness and sound morality," while it fails not to rebuke dancing, theatre-going and sleeping in church, as sins perilous to the soul, deliberately refuses to utter a single word in condemnation of the sin of man-stealing, and confides an absolute censorship over all its publications to a man who defends slavery from the Scriptures, and whose "*South-side View*" of that system shocked the moral sense of the friends of freedom throughout the civilized world. The American Bible Society not only refuses to make any effort to give the Bible to the slaves, but sanctions those interpretations of the Book which make it the bulwark of oppression.

This is indeed a gloomy picture; but we believe that, on the whole, the cause of freedom is advancing, and we do not for a moment permit ourselves to doubt that it will ultimately triumph. The truth, faithfully proclaimed, is the mightiest agent in the universe. It must eventually

work the destruction of the system which exposes us to the scorn of the world and the retributions of Heaven.

The union between the free and the slave States is a compact of guilt and shame. Every day's experience of the workings of the National Government serves to demonstrate the preposterous absurdity as well as wickedness of the attempt to bind together as one nation States founded upon the principles of universal liberty and equality, and States which nourish and perpetuate the worst system of oppression that ever blackened the page of history. It is impossible for the former to stand in political alliance with the latter without corrupting the very sources of their national life and receiving into all their veins and arteries the foul blood of oppression and slavery. Not until the North has the courage and the manliness to sunder the ligament that binds her to "the body of this death" and holds her in guilty alliance with men-stealers, will she be truly free, or be able to break the chains of the slaves, or to present to the world an example worthy of imitation. Not until she banishes the slave-hunter from her soil, and solemnly proclaims her purpose to protect the fugitive bondman by the full power of her sovereignty, will she be able truly to respect herself or to command the respect of the civilized world.

While we rejoice in all that has been done through political instrumentalities to promote the cause of freedom, and will continue to rejoice in whatever of good may be achieved by such means, we are constrained to declare that our main reliance for the success of that cause is upon the **MORAL AGITATION** by which truth is persistently applied to the hearts and consciences of the people, and the wickedness of slavery fearlessly exhibited in the light of the Divine law of humanity. The American Anti-Slavery Society and its auxiliaries have our sympathy and hearty coöperation in the work to which they have been so long and so faithfully devoted, and we hope that they may not be turned aside from their purpose until victory shall crown their efforts and liberty be proclaimed throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.

## II.—CASTE.

One of the bitterest fruits of slavery in our land is the cruel spirit of caste, which makes the complexion even of the free negro a badge of social inferiority, exposing him to insult in the steamboat and the rail-car, and in all places of public resort, not even excepting the church—banishing him from remunerative occupations, expelling him from the legislative hall, the magistrate's bench and the jury-box, and crushing his noblest aspirations under a weight of prejudice and proscription, which he struggles in vain to throw off. Against this un-Christian and hateful spirit we are constrained to enter our earnest and heartfelt protest, and to entreat all those whom it is our privilege to address to give it no countenance, but to testify against it both by precept and example.

### III.—COEQUALITY OF WOMAN.

The Woman's Rights movement has now, as heretofore, our hearty sympathy. We rejoice in the evidences of its progress, which meet us on every side, in the altered tone of the press, in the increasing facilities afforded for the education of woman, and in the wider avenues of profitable industry that are opening before her. It is our firm conviction that the best interests of the human family would be promoted by the admission of women to an equal voice with men in making and administering the laws, by giving them the highest advantages of education, by opening to them all the avenues of professional life, and by guaranteeing to them equal property-rights with men. To deprive them of these rights and advantages, upon any plea of intellectual inferiority, or of reverence for authority, custom or precedent, is tyranny. The subjection of the wife to the authority of the husband is destructive of domestic happiness. There are few among us who have not witnessed some painful illustration of this truth. Examples may be found in almost every neighborhood of wives crushed by the tyranny of husbands, and subjected to the most degrading annoyances and exactions, for which the law affords no remedy. The wife submits, in many cases, only because she is pecuniarily dependent on the husband, having no legal claim to the estate which her labor, no less than his, has helped to acquire, and being obliged in consequence to endure the wretchedness thus entailed upon her, or to go out into the world without a roof to cover her head, to face the ills and bear the burdens of abject poverty. The wife who "guides the house" has a common right with the husband who manages the farm, the shop or the store, to the use and control of the property acquired by their joint exertions. Many husbands, apparently unconscious of this self-evident truth, treat their wives, not as equals, but as dependents upon their bounty. We fear that some of those even who have professed assent to the general doctrines of woman's rights, are yet unconsciously, and from the force of habit, acting on the assumption that their wives are their servants rather than their peers. There is need, even among reformers, of a constant reiteration of sound doctrine on this important subject; and this need will not have passed away until a radical change has been wrought in public opinion and our laws are made to conform to the principles of justice and equality.

### IV.—WAR.

Of all the evils which mankind have brought upon themselves, none is more appalling in its effects, or more inconsistent with the spirit of human brotherhood, than war. That beings created in the image and likeness of God, endowed with immeasurable capacities of reason and affection, and fitted for happiness in devotion to one another's welfare, should so "debase their heavenly birth" as deliberately to array themselves, nation against

nation, in bloody conflict, killing one another by wholesale, is as astonishing as it is lamentable. Wars and fightings, according to the Apostle James, come of "the lusts which war in your members"—in other words, from the dominance of the animal and selfish faculties over the moral and spiritual. They tend, in the nature of things, to brutalize humanity, to excite and foster every malign passion, and thus to undermine the foundations of private morality and public welfare.

There can be no greater delusion than to suppose that the cause of human liberty is ever really and permanently promoted by war. Our higher nature earnestly responds to the admonitions of Scripture: "Recompense to no man evil for evil;" "Overcome evil with good;" "Resist not evil;" "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." In the words of a devoted philanthropist,\* which commend themselves to us as words of truth and wisdom: "The weapons of death are the legitimate weapons of Despotism; while those of Liberty are thought, speech, intellectual enlightenment, protest, contumacy, nonconformity, untiring persistency, indomitable purpose, unconquerable will, moral rebellion, abiding faith in the right, the Divine spirit of martyrdom."

It is worse, doubtless, to submit, *in a servile and cowardly spirit*, to the burdens and exactions of tyranny, than to resist them by bloody means; but to endure oppression, however cruel, in the spirit of meekness, and, while protesting against it in the name of justice and humanity, to refrain from retaliation and violence, is the highest effort of courage, the noblest exhibition of a godlike and manly character. The human race may have advanced more rapidly and surely through a bloody resistance to tyranny than it could have done through a pusillanimous and slavish submission; but we believe its progress in intelligence, morality and happiness would have been still greater, if the friends of truth and freedom, respecting the awful sanctity of human life, had used no other weapons than those which an Apostle of the Christian Faith has declared to be "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

#### V.—TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS.

We renew our protest against the gallows as a relic of barbarism, as originating in the spirit of revenge, and tending to increase the evils it is designed to cure. Society, in dealing with criminals, is under obligation to seek their highest good, to treat them in the way best adapted to reform them; and this, instead of promoting crime, is the best and only effectual way to prevent it. We suggest to the friends of humanity everywhere that they ought to call the attention of legislative bodies to this subject, and, by the diffusion of light among the people, prepare the way for the abolition of capital and all other vindictive punishment.

\* Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

#### VI.—TEMPERANCE.

We renew our testimony in favor of the principle of Total Abstinence from the use of all intoxicating drinks as a beverage, as the only effectual safeguard against the terrible evils of drunkenness, entreating the friends of humanity everywhere not only to make this principle a rule of life for themselves, but to labor diligently to commend it to others, especially to the young and to all who have influence over them. We fear that the friends of temperance, within the last few years, have been so exclusively devoted to the work of suppressing the traffic in intoxicating drinks by penal laws, that they have neglected to employ, as they should, those moral instrumentalities which are adapted to reform the inebriate and deliver the country from the evils of drunkenness. After all that has been done in this cause, there is still great need of the diffusion of light among the people. In this work we trust that all those who call themselves Progressive Friends will ever be found zealously engaged.

#### VII.—TOBACCO.

We renew our testimony against the utterly useless, disgusting and every way injurious practice of chewing, snuffing and smoking tobacco; and we do so with the greater emphasis because, unhappily, the practice prevails to a considerable extent among those who are in active sympathy and coöperation with this religious society. We have great compassion for those who have been so long the slaves of an unnatural and vicious appetite, that, while they know and confess that its indulgence is wrong, they have yet almost lost the power of resistance; but we are constrained to admonish such that they ought at once to summon all their manhood to the conflict and break their chains at once and forever. In refusing to do it they will blunt their moral sensibility, and inflict a great wrong upon all those over whom their example has influence. We entreat parents, teachers and other guardians of the young to set their faces firmly against a habit which is declared by the highest medical authority to be injurious to both body and mind, and which, we fear, is rapidly increasing in our country.

#### VIII.—SECTARIANISM.

Believing that the true Church is composed of all the faithful lovers of God and man, the world over, who work the works of personal and practical righteousness, and labor for the redemption and advancement of the human race—that every one who thus doeth the will of the Father is accepted of him—we would again bear emphatic and earnest testimony against SECTARIANISM as one of the greatest, most deceptive, and demoralizing sins of the times. And by Sectarianism we mean that spirit which builds up and sustains religious parties on the basis of a creed, antiquated

or modern, which ignores the "golden-rule" Morality of Christ and universal Philanthropy as essentials of Christian character, and rejects and condemns as "heretics" all who repudiate its "doctrines." We daily observe that this "substitute" for love and good will, and the various graces of the Spirit, is narrowing, dwarfing and vitiating the minds of many of its immediate victims, and making not a few morose, bigoted, oppressive and cruel; and that it is greatly hindering the progress of mankind in all moral and spiritual things.

#### IX.—“THE GREAT REVIVAL.”

While we would not be slow to recognize any good that may have been incidentally effected thereby, we must, on the whole regard as deceptive and spurious, the "Great Revival of Religion," which has lately swept like an epidemic over the land. That such is its character is manifest to us, because it is a revival of the prevailing and popular religion of the country—a religion which sanctions slavery, war, and other abounding iniquities ; because it is well pleasing to pulpit recreancy, church corruption, sectarian exclusiveness, political self-seeking and pro-slavery brutality ; and because it inculcates false views of God and of man, and is calculated to augment the power of priesthood and superstition. The friends of religion and common sense should be stimulated thereby to greater earnestness and fidelity in their efforts for the diffusion of light and truth, and the promotion of practical righteousness.

#### X.—EDUCATION.

We feel a deep interest in the efforts now making in various parts of the country to give a wider scope and impart a higher character to our systems of education, which we must regard as exceedingly defective. To all such efforts we desire to contribute our efficient aid. It is especially to be lamented that so many of our popular schools and seminaries are under the paralyzing influence of sectarianism. The friends of reform and progress should take special care not to place their children in institutions where they will be taught to subordinate the Divine principles of justice and freedom to a selfish and worldly expediency ; and in their plans to secure a proper education for their own children, they should not forget the duty they owe to the community. They should aim at nothing less than the physical, intellectual, and moral education of all the children of the country, and be ready at all times to promote any plan that seems best adapted to effect this object.

Adopted by the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends,  
1858.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,  
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.  
SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS,

## Public Worship.

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Let us consider the subject of Public Worship.

To secure a favorable starting-point for this consideration, let us go behind the matters upon which men are divided in opinion, the rites of particular churches, the customs of particular nations, and find ourselves upon something which all will agree in recognizing as truth.

God, being perfect in every imaginable excellence, is entitled to honor and reverence from his creatures; and history proves to us that all nations have felt their obligation to pay Him honor and reverence. No trait of human nature is more constant, among all the varieties of men, than this.

As the feelings of the heart naturally tend to manifest themselves in the life, this honor and reverence will of course find some form of expression on the part of those who truly feel them; and the particular mode of expression of individuals or communities will be more or less appropriate, other things being equal, according to their amount of intelligence.

History assures us that, among communities equally disposed (as far as our knowledge extends) to honor their Creator and conform themselves to His will, some (supposing that God needed nourishment like themselves) have periodically placed on a consecrated spot their choicest articles of food and drink for His use; others, of somewhat less gross conception, have sought to regale Him with fragrant incense and perfumed oils, and pictured Him to themselves as "smelling a sweet savor," and gratified with it; others have formed solemn processions, attired in gorgeous robes, and bearing costly emblems to do him honor; others, supposing Him pleased with blood, have killed men or inferior animals, singly or in numbers, upon His altar; others have sought to please Him by the mutilation of their own bodies and those of their children; others by self-inflicted bodily privations and sufferings, falling short of mutilation; and others, by similar violence done to the reason, the conscience, the social feelings and the affections. Some have thought their prayers to be more acceptable when written on strips of paper and kept moving in the air; others, when presented through the mediation of a saint; others, when offered on a particular day, and in a particular place; and almost all have esteemed the mediation of a priest to be either necessary or highly desirable.

That all these superstitious ideas and practices *have* existed in some dark period of the world is not strange; perhaps it is not strange that

most or all of them *still* exist, in countries not claiming to be civilized or Christian; but that so many of them continue, not only in existence but in high repute and honor, among nations claiming to be civilized and Christian, and even among those really most advanced in both these characteristics—this is truly amazing.

If a native of Canton, or Calcutta, or Constantinople, declining to follow, with blind obedience, the customs of his father, or the directions of his father's priest, should apply himself, by a diligent comparison of those customs and directions with the contents of the books reputed sacred in that country, and of both these with such probable conclusions respecting God as may be gathered from His works in external nature, and of the whole with such judgments as reason and conscience might form as to the character fittest to be ascribed to God, and the service most likely to be required by Him of men—and if such a person, distinguishing, through such an investigation, a better mode of serving God than that practised by his countrymen, should thenceforward discard the latter and adopt the former—we should say that he did wisely and well.

We should say this unhesitatingly of every inhabitant of every foreign nation. The people of every foreign nation would say the same of us. Probably this judgment would be correct on the part of both. Probably such a scrutiny and comparison, applied to our own ideas and customs, would show us some observances akin to those which we stigmatize as irrational and superstitions in other nations, and perhaps also some deficiencies, the supply of which would bring us more into harmony both with reason and religion.

Every nation of the earth believes in, reverences and worships God. And they do this with none the less confidence that no one has yet demonstrated His existence. If, on one hand, the abundant and weighty reasons for this belief fall short of absolute proof, on the other hand, to relinquish this belief on that account would involve us in unspeakable absurdities, imposing upon us many incomprehensibilities in the place of one, and resisting a tendency of our nature so constant and so universal—exhibiting itself so equally in the present and in all past ages, both among cultivated people and savages—as to form a characteristic of the human family not less marked and peculiar than reason itself. To resist such a kind and such an amount of evidence, because it falls short of demonstration, would be to reverse a rule which we find it needful and wise to act upon in all the other affairs of life—namely, to value and act upon circumstantial evidence in proportion to its amount and its weight—and would be alike unphilosophical and unpractical. The belief in God is as natural and as reasonable as the belief in our own existence, and the few instances of minds so peculiar and erratic as to deny each of these propositions are such exceptions as are justly said to prove the rule. We are compelled, in the whole of our course through life, to believe a great many things which we

do not understand; and we find it wise, and safe, and advantageous to acquiesce in this compulsion, and practically to act upon such subjects of belief. How much more readily, then, should we acquiesce in it when the nature of the subject itself forbids us to understand, as much as the evidence forbids us to doubt. Thus, while it is absurd for the thing made to assume that it thoroughly comprehends its maker, it is equally absurd for us to ignore and contradict the abundant evidence that *we* are made, because we do not so perfectly comprehend our Maker as to demonstrate Him.

It is certain that the entire family of man recognizes and worships God. The *manner* of doing this is exceedingly various.

As our natural religious instincts compel us to recognize the existence and the power of God, so the researches of reason, striving after a clearer, wider and deeper knowledge of Him, require us to assume the absolute perfection of His nature, and of every attribute and department of His being. We can no more afford to relinquish the idea of His infinite wisdom than of His infinite power, or of His infinite love than either. While, therefore, we must assume that He favorably accepts the tribute rendered by sincere honor, or reverence, or love—even when these are so unintelligently manifested, as by pulling out a tooth, or cutting off a finger, in compliance with the priestly assurance that such worship is most acceptable to Him—we must also assume that He is *best* pleased with a service directed by intelligence not less than by love, and accordant at once with His nature and ours. If we recognize our bodies, minds and souls, as created by Infinite Wisdom, we shall equally recognize the absurdity of mutilating either, in the hope of rendering Him more favorable to us, or us more acceptable to Him. Of course He does not wish His work undone or counteracted in any manner or degree; of course He will be pleased to see the various powers of His creatures voluntarily exercised in attempting to co-operate with His power and will; and it is equally certain that He will be *best* pleased by that voluntary exercise of their powers which is so intelligently directed as *actually* to forward His purposes.

Worship is honor, reverence, allegiance or love to God (one or all of these) *manifested in act*.

Assuming the actual existence of these dispositions in our hearts, how shall we appropriately *manifest* them to God and to our fellow-men? This is the question. Perhaps we shall best find the answer by dividing this into three questions.

1. How may we best honor God?
2. How may we best *show Him* that we honor Him?
3. How may we best *show our fellow-men* that we honor Him?

Where shall we find the answers to these questions?

It seems evident, not merely that we should refuse no ray of light, from whatever source, that may come to us upon so important a subject,

but that we should *seek* such light from *every* quarter; from the Scriptures of all past ages, and from every source of contemporary wisdom; from the works of God in material nature—from the careful investigations of that reason which He has given to guide us in all other things—and from that which we judge to be His “still, small voice,” uttered in the depths of our souls when we are most withdrawn from prejudice, passion, and self-will. We cannot spare one of these sources of information; and in comparing and selecting from them all, we need not fear that one indication of God’s will will contradict another.

#### How may we best honor God?

We call ourselves His children and His servants. The love belonging to the first of these relations, and the honor incumbent on the second, are both best shown by *obedience*; by diligently fulfilling the *duties* of children and servants, as they come before us, day by day, in the ordinary business of life; by *using* the talents intrusted to us, and using them in such a manner as to improve ourselves and benefit others; by faithfully doing the work for which we were sent into the world, that is, the very work, great or small, honored or despised among men, which our inward powers and our outward circumstances unite in pointing out as *our proper business*. The daily doing of just this thing, in just this manner, is the very best method of honoring our Father, God.

#### But how may we best *show Him* that we honor Him?

Does not the question answer itself? The God who sees, without the possibility of mistake, both our actions and our motives—who, being present with us, has beheld every circumstance of the daily life we have been leading—does not need to be informed whether we wish to do Him honor. The faithful labor in our ordinary occupation honored Him at the time it was performed, and He knew it; the penitence for any wrong act, and the effort at amendment, honored Him at the very moment when the first was felt and the second made, and He knew it; the attempt to improve ourselves or to help a fellow-creature honored Him when each was done, and He knew it; the perseverance under difficulty, the patience under provocation, the good returned for evil, the aspiration towards every form of excellence, the rising, undiscouraged, after every fall, each one of these honored God then and there, and He knew it.

It appears, then, that God does not need any demonstration or manifestation of a purpose on our part to do Him honor, other than that faithful fulfilment of our daily duties which in itself constitutes that honor, and the existence and purpose of which He already knows. Moreover, it seems manifest, that for the doer of any faithful and acceptable service to go to another place for the purpose of manifesting to God that he wishes to honor Him, as if He were more present elsewhere than in the place where the service was done, or as if He *could* receive better information, is a questioning both of His omnipresence and His omniscience, and thus is an

injurious imputation rather than an honor. On the other hand, the offering of formal, verbal expressions of honor to God by one who has not done, and is not disposed to do, the faithful service in the duties of life of which we have spoken, would be hypocrisy and presumption.

But, how little soever God may need a special demonstration for the purpose of *showing* Him our honor and reverence, do not *men* need one, for their own sakes?

In a world where we are often solicited by pleasure to neglect duty, and where we are so connected by sympathy with our fellow-beings that the knowledge of right or wrong principles, or the sight of right or wrong actions in others has often a powerful influence in helping or hindering one's self, is there not an obvious advantage in some manifestation by which those who can *not* read the heart, especially the thoughtless, the weak and the wicked, may recognize such sound principle, active faith and sincere piety as actually exist in the men and women around them? Is not a sense of obligation and responsibility to God so important a part of man's character, and so likely to tend towards an active sense of his responsibilities and duties to his fellow-men, as to make it desirable to them to know in whom such a principle really exists?

Admitting that these questions are to be answered in the affirmative, let us inquire what the observances now in use, called Public Worship, do to supply this need, and whether it is so perfectly supplied as to leave no room for amendment?

The method ordinarily taken to secure the advantages of this public expression of the feelings of men towards God is the same in kind, however different in detail, among Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans. It is to set apart a certain portion of time from ordinary uses, and call it *holy* time; to separate a certain place from the business of common life, and call it a *holy* place; to set apart certain men from the ordinary methods of gaining a subsistence, and, after they have passed through a prescribed discipline and course of ceremonies, to call them a *consecrated* or *sacred* class; and then, periodically assembling at the time and in the place thus designated, and using the mediation of the persons thus consecrated, to express, in certain customary formulas, that which they consider it reverential and proper to express to the Creator. This is called Public Worship; and some periodical simultaneous demonstration of this kind is considered indispensable alike by Christians, Jews, Mohammedans and Pagans, in addition to such more private expression of devotional feeling as individuals may choose, either for themselves or their families, or both.

We have seen that such demonstrations, considered in their aspect towards God, are useless and unsatisfactory, being a formal attempt to tell Him something that He already knows. But they have other objectionable features.

Since the observances practised by people of various forms of religion

in our country, including, as essential component parts, the recognition of holy times, holy places, holy rites or ceremonies, and consecrated or sacred persons, are represented to the people of those sects, as appointments of God, whose favor will be more surely gained by the use of these instrumentalities; we find an additional objection to the present system of Public Worship in the misrepresentation thereby perpetuated of the character and commands of God, and in the perversion of the venerated name of Jesus of Nazareth, who is represented as having appointed these superstitious observances.

Again. The invention of these observances, and the inculcation of them in the name of God, is not only a misuse of His name, and a libel upon His character; but it is an attempt, which must in the nature of things be vain and nugatory, to invent new duties, and gain credit with God for the performance of them, even while we leave the duties that are *obviously* of His appointment very imperfectly performed.

Every attempt to elevate things evil in themselves, or trivial and useless in themselves, to the dignity of duties, and to represent them as suited to gain for us the favor of our Creator, does harm in all these ways: it violates the truth; it corrupts and degrades our idea of the perfection of God, which of course re-acts injuriously upon our own characters; it sets up a low and a false standard, by which to guide our aspirations, and measure our attainments; it wastes upon purely factitious and useless things that resolution, strength and fortitude, the whole of which are needed for the actual duties of life, and that power of self-restraint, the whole of which is needed to combat its actual temptations; and it adds to the difficulty of distinguishing hypocritical pretenders to piety; since these can and will go through the factitious observances, and gain the credit connected with them, as seriously and punctiliously as honest men. Thus the pretences, (all seriously urged, at the present day, by one form of religion or another in our own country,) that a man will more surely render himself acceptable to God by cutting off a part of his body—or by renouncing marriage—or by wearing a peculiar garb—or by occasionally going without his dinner—or by committing his whole life implicitly to the guidance of a person, assumed to be consecrated or sacred—or by periodically receiving, from the hands of such a person, a bit of bread and a sip of wine—or by yielding to such a person his own body, to be dipped in water—or the body of his infant son, to be sprinkled—or the body and soul of his grown-up daughter, to be kept in the sort of prison called a convent—are not only false but corrupting; they not only displace and nullify a certain amount of truth, but engraft upon the character, and interweave in the life a certain amount of pernicious error; taking the aspect of religion without being really religious, they not only give us the false for the true, but they give us erroneous notions about what the true religion is.

We have now to consider whether that part of the Sabbatical observ-

ances in use in this country, which is properly called Public Worship, *benefits men.* Useless in its relation to God, does it assist men better to fulfil any of the duties they owe each other, or assure them who, among their fellow-men, are most honest and worthy, soundest in mind, or firmest in principle?

It is plain that Public Worship neither does nor can fulfil the function last mentioned, of enabling us to discriminate between good and bad men, by observing who practise it and who do not, because the external actions in which it consists can be, and are, performed as thoroughly by the hypocrite as the saint. While attendance on these observances remains as reputable as at present, bad men will of course use so cheap and easy a means of seeming to be good men. The audience at any particular church, on any particular occasion, will certainly be, as to character, a promiscuous audience, consisting of persons good, bad, and indifferent. The mere fact of a regular attendance at church, chapel, synagogue, or meeting-house, may be referable to so many and such various causes, that it gives no indication whatever of a man's real character. Practically, the rule which Jesus gave—"By their fruits ye shall know them"—will less frequently mislead us, in judging of the characters of men, than any other.

This fact then guides us to a correct answer to our third question—How may we best manifest to our fellow-men that we honor and reverence God?

We reply—First, and chiefly, by a *life* which shall show this to all who see us; by quietly regulating the business and pleasure, the labor, rest, and recreation of every day, in conformity to what we understand to be God's will: next, by frankly saying, when the doing of a wrong thing is proposed to us by another person, whether that other person be wicked or weak, or merely thoughtless, "I cannot do it, because it seems to me to be wrong; because it is inconsistent with my idea of my duty to God:" and lastly, by being always ready, as Paul recommends, to give to every one who asks it a reason for our faith or our works.

Will not such a life publish to *our* world, large or small, such honor and reverence as we really feel for the Creator, quite as thoroughly and efficiently as conformity to the round of petty superstitions heretofore described? quite as thoroughly and efficiently as a "profession of religion" in the broad aisle of a church? (a declaration of your courage when there is no enemy in sight)—a ceremonial show of purification with water, as if you lived in the dispensation of types and shadows—a monthly ceremony of eating bread when you are not hungry, and drinking wine when you are not thirsty, as if these could show or produce any excellence of character—and a weekly attendance on vicarious devotional performances, whether or not they express, or excite, your own "soul's sincere desire," and whether or not the sermon accompanying them is to your edification?

We propose, then, that the advantages legitimately belonging to

an acknowledgment before men, of our faith in, and allegiance to our Heavenly Father, be secured in the most simple and natural manner: first, by a life so obviously in accordance with such faith and allegiance, as shall compel belief in it; and next, by making verbal profession of it in the very times when, and in the very places where, and to the very persons by whom such a declaration is especially needed; by an explicit statement on the spot, of our determination to obey the will of God, or the laws of duty, to whatever person shall venture to propose to us any thing implying that we forget or disregard those considerations.

Since Public Worship in our country is combined with preaching or instruction, we will guard, as far as may be, against misconstruction, by repeating, that we have here been speaking only of the former.

Every human being needs religious instruction, and it is highly important to the public welfare, that means should be provided for it to be given and received. But this could be done quite independently of the present forms of Public Worship.

The intelligent reader will also notice, that we have neither expressed nor implied any objection to the idea or the practice of prayer—the communion of the individual soul with its Maker—such prayer as Jesus of Nazareth inculcated in the well-known saying, “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut thy door.” Every human being feels the need, some more, some less frequently, of entering into communication with God, and obtaining somewhat of Him; and it is an unspeakable blessing, that at all times, and in all places, he who feels this need may mentally address a present and loving Father, and know that his request is heard and heeded by Infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness, who will certainly do for him *either thus or better*. Both these points, the need of instruction, and the benefit of individual prayer, are taken for granted as obvious.

We will close with a single question to those young persons who, with sound principles and good purposes, have yet felt under a certain restraint in regard to the expression of them.

Pious language, or language exhibiting an habitual remembrance of, and regard to, our responsibility to God, has become (as we think, through its customary connection with the factitious and useless observances of which we have been speaking,) a *damaged* phraseology. It has been so long and so grossly abused, that its use is apt to suggest to our minds cant, rather than true reverence and sincere religious feeling, in him who uses it. This double perversion, first of the language of piety by those who commonly use it, and next of the sentiments which would naturally be called up by such language in the hearts of those who hear it, may fairly be laid to the charge of the popular or orthodox churches, whose pious talk stands so grossly in contrast with their lives. But we are not to acquiesce in this desecration of language, so natural and so useful as the language of alle-

giance and love to our Creator. God is our Father and our Friend, as well as our Master; and if we are sometimes called to vindicate our relation of *duty* to Him, in the face of the worldling, we are no less authorized to declare our relation of *love* to Him, in the face of the churchling.

Of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum.

The real advantages of an open expression of such honor, reverence, allegiance and love, as we really feel towards God, are *not* secured by the method at present in vogue, of periodically meeting in a public place to say that we feel those things; on the contrary, this method is attended by special disadvantages and evils:

The method which *does* secure these advantages, and which seems adapted to secure them in the best possible manner, is the expression of our feelings of honor, reverence, allegiance or love to God, by speech or by action, as the case requires, *when and where such expression is naturally called for, IN CONNECTION WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUSINESS OF EVERY DAY OF EVERY MAN'S LIFE.*

In the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, Sixth month, 2d, the foregoing paper, from the pen of CHARLES K. WHIPPLE, of Boston, was read, eliciting many expressions of satisfaction. The Meeting heartily concurred in directing it to be published with its proceedings.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,  
OLIVER JOHNSON,  
SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, } Clerks.

THE TRUE CHURCH.—By his Church our Savior did not mean a party, bearing the name of a human leader, distinguished by a form or an opinion, and, on the ground of this distinction, denying the name or character of Christians to all but themselves. He means by it the body of his friends and followers, *who truly imbibe his spirit*, no matter by what name they are called, in what house they worship, by what peculiarities of mode and opinion they are distinguished, under what sky they live, or what language they speak. These are the true Church—men made better, made holy, virtuous, by his religion—men who, hoping in his promises, keep his commandments.—WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

# Four Sermons

PREACHED AT THE PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING OF PROGRESSIVE  
FRIENDS, FIFTH MONTH 30TH AND 31ST, 1858.

BY THEODORE PARKER,  
*Minister of the XXVIIth Congregational Society in Boston.*

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## SERMON I.

### THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire.—DEUT. iv. 24.  
God is love.—1 JOHN iv. 16.

SOME years ago I spoke to you “Of the Relation between the Ecclesiastical Institutions and the Religious Consciousness of the American People.” I am now here again to speak on great and kindred themes. You have no authoritative Scriptures; your Bible is the Universe, the World of Matter your Old Testament, the World of Man the New. In both there are revelations every day, for that canon is not closed, nor ever will be. With the catholic spirit of Universal Religion one of your Clerks has just read from the Scriptures of the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Persians, the Mohammedans, the Hebrews, and the Christians. There is one Material Nature about us all, one Human Nature in us all, one Divine Nature, one Infinite God above us all, immanent in each, and equally near to the Buddhist and the Christian, equally loving to all. He is no respecter of sects more than of persons. I wish to speak of the notions men have of God, and of the effect thereof. So, if your business allow and your patience will endure so much, I will preach four Sermons:

I. OF THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN  
THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

II. OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONCEPTION OF GOD, AND ITS RELATION TO  
THE SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS WANTS OF THIS AGE.

III. OF THE NATURAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL IDEA OF GOD, AND ITS RE-  
LATION TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS WANTS OF THE AGE.

## IV. OF THE SOUL'S NORMAL DELIGHT IN THE INFINITE GOD.

These are all great themes, of interest to mankind—not least, I think, to Progressive Friends.

This morning I ask your attention to some Thoughts on the Progressive Development of the Conception of God in the various Books of the Bible.

In the human race nothing is ever still; the stream of humanity rolls continually forward, change following change; nation succeeds to nation, theology to theology, thought to thought. Taken as a whole, this change is a Progress, an ascent from the lower and ruder to the higher and more comprehensive. Individuals die, special families pass off, nations go under; and a whole race, like the American Indians, may perish, and their very blood be dried up from the ground; yet still mankind survives, and all the material or spiritual good achieved by any race, nation, family, individual, reverts at last to mankind, who not only has eminent domain over the earth, but is likewise heir at history of Moses, of the Heraclides, of Egypt, and of the American Indians. So of much that slips out from the decaying hand of the individual or the race, nothing is ever lost to humanity; much is outgrown, nought wasted. The milk-teeth of the baby are as necessary as the meat-teeth, the biters and grinders of the adult man. Little Ikie Newton had a top and a hoop; spinning and trundling were as useful to the boy as mathematical rules of calculation to the great and world-renowned Sir Isaac. The Progress of Mankind is continuous and onward, as much subject to a natural law of development as our growth from babyhood to adult life.

You see this change and progress in all departments of human activity, in Religion and Theology, as distinct as in spinning and weaving. Theological ideas are instruments for making character, as carpenters' tools for making houses. Take the long sweep of four thousand years that history runs over, and the improvement in theological ideas is as remarkable as the change in carpenters' tools. You see this progress especially in the Conception of God, and in the Worship that is paid to him conformable to that conception. Here the change is continuous, and the progress is full of encouragement for the future.

What unlikeness in the conceptions of God which Christian men have to-day! The notion of God set forth in certain churches differs from yours and mine more than Moloch differs from Jehovah. Certainly the God which some ministers scare their congregations withal, is to me only a Devil—a Devil who has no existence, and never appears out of the theological graveyard, where this ghost of buried superstitions “walks” from time to time to frighten men into the momentary panic of a revival.

The Bible has become the Sacred Book of all Christendom. It is not only valued for its worth, which is certainly very great, but still more for its fancied authority—because it is thought to be a Revelation, made di-

rectly and miraculously by God, to certain men whom he inspired with the doctrine it contains. Now, God must know himself, and that perfectly, and if he make a revelation thereof, he must portray himself exactly as he is. So it is maintained in all Christendom, that to learn the character of God, you are not to go to the World of Matter, or to the World of Man, but only to Revelation, which mirrors back to you his exact image and likeness; giving you God, the whole of God, and nothing but God. Accordingly, it is said that the conception of God is the same in all parts of the Bible, howsoever old or new, without variableness or shadow of turning.

But when you come to look at the Bible itself, and study it part by part, and then put the results of your study into a whole, you find a remarkable difference in regard to the character of God himself, that depends on the general civilization and enlightenment of the times and the writers; the further you go back, the ruder all things become. Take the whole of Greek Literature, from Homer, eleven hundred years before Christ, to Anna Comnena, eleven hundred years after him, and there is a great change in the poetic representations of God. The same thing happens in the books of the Bible. They extend over twelve or thirteen hundred years; it may be, perhaps, fourteen hundred. Perhaps Genesis is the oldest book, and the Fourth Gospel the newest. What a difference between the God in Genesis and that in the Fourth Gospel! Can any thoughtful man conceive that these two conflicting and various notions of God, could ever have come from the same source? Let any one of you read through the book of Genesis, and then the Fourth Gospel, and you will be astonished at the diversity, nay, the hostility even, between the God in the old book and the new one. Then, and at some subsequent time, look at the various books between the two, and you see what different notions of the Divine Being there are in this "infallible miraculous revelation of God."

Let us look at this great matter in some details, and to see just what the facts are, and make the whole matter as clear as noonday light, divide the Bible into its three great parts, the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Genesis may perhaps have been written in its present form, about a thousand years before Christ, though some scholars put it a few hundreds of years nearer our own time; at any rate it seems to have been compiled from ancient documents, some of them, perhaps, existing thirteen or fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, though others are clearly later. The book of Daniel, a spurious work, was evidently written between 170 and 160 years before Christ. In the Apocrypha, the book of Ecclesiasticus is, perhaps, the oldest work, and seems to have been written about 180 years before the birth of Jesus. The latest book is the Wisdom of Solomon, of uncertain date. In the New

Testament, Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is the oldest, and was perhaps written 58 or 60 years after Christ; the Fourth Gospel, I think, is the last, and was written, perhaps, 120 or 140 years after Christ. There are seventy books in the canonical and apocryphal Bible. With the exception of fourteen prophets, Ezra, Nehemiah, David and Asaph—the two authors of some thirty or forty, perhaps fifty of the Psalms,—we know the name of no writer of the nine-and-thirty books of the Old Testament. Of the Apocrypha we know the name of the writer of the book of Ecclesiasticus, of him no more; of others not even that. In the New Testament it seems clear that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, that to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians; but I doubt if we are certain who wrote any other of its twenty-seven books! Here, then, out of seventy biblical books, containing the writings of more than one hundred authoress, we know the names of fourteen Hebrew Prophets, two Psalmists, two other writers in the Old Testament, one in the Apocrypha, one in the New Testament—twenty men! This fact that we know so little of the authorship of the biblical books is fatal to their authority as a standard of faith, but it does not in the smallest degree affect their value as religious documents, or as signs of the times when they were written. I don't care who made the vane on the steeple, if it tell which way the wind blows—that is all I want: I don't know who reared these handsome flowers; it matters not; their beauty and fragrance tell their own story. We know the time the documents came from, and they are monuments of the various ages, though we know not who made or put them together.

Now look at the conception of God in the first and last of these three divisions. Of course, in the brevity of a morning's sermon I can only select the most remarkable and characteristic things. I shall begin with the oldest part of the Old Testament, and end with the latest part of the New.

I. At first, it seems, the Hebrews believed in many gods, and no effort of the wisest and best men could keep the nation from falling back to idolatry for centuries. It was not until after the Babylonian Captivity, which began in 586 B. C., and ended about eighty years later, that the Israelites renounced their idolatry; then contact with monotheistic and civilized people corrected this vice.

At first, in the Bible, Jehovah appears as one God amongst others, and seems to have his council of gods about him. Next he is the special God of the descendants of Jacob, and called the God of Israel. By and by he is represented as stronger than any of the other gods; he can beat them in battle, though sometimes he gets worsted. Finally he is the only God, and has regard for all nations, though he still takes special care of the Hebrews, who are his chosen people. The book of Job, I think, is the only one in the Old Testament which makes it appear that God cares for all men alike, and this seems to be the only book in the Old Testa-

ment which was not written by a Jew. I think it is one of the latest books in that collection.

Now see what character is ascribed to God in the earliest documents of the Bible. The first five books of Moses are the oldest; they contain the most rude and unspiritual ideas of God. He is represented as a very limited and imperfect being. He makes the world in six days, part by part, one thing at a time, as a mechanic does his work. He makes man out of dust, in "his own image and likeness," breathes into him, and he becomes a living soul. God looks on the world, when he has finished it, and is pleased with his work, "and behold it was very good." But he is tired with his week's work, rests on the seventh day, and "was refreshed." The next week he looks at his work, to see how it goes on, and he finds that he must mend it a little. All animals rejoice in their mates, but thoughtful Adam wanders lone; he must have his Eve. So God puts him into a deep sleep, takes one of his ribs, makes a woman of it, and the next morning there is a help meet for him. But the new man and woman behave rather badly. God comes down and walks in the garden in the cool of the day, calls Adam and Eve, inquires into their behavior, chides them for their misconduct, and, in consequence of their wrong deed, he is very angry with all things, and curses the serpent, curses Eve, curses Adam, and even the ground. The man and woman have tasted of the Tree of Knowledge, and he turns them out of the garden of Eden lest they should also eat of the Tree of Life, and thereby live forever. By and by God repents that he made man, and "it grieved him at his heart," they behave so badly; so in his wrath he sweeps off all mankind, except eight persons; but after the flood is over, Noah offers a burnt offering, and God smells the sweet savor and is pacified, and says he will not again curse the ground; and he will never destroy the human race a second time.

To know what happens, he must go from place to place: thus he understands that the people are building a tower, and comes near enough to look at it, and, not liking the undertaking, he says, "Go to now, let us go down and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech;" he scatters them abroad, and they cannot build the tower, which was to reach up to heaven. Afterwards he hears bad news from Sodom and Gomorrah, that "their sin is grievous." He does not quite credit the tidings, and says, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me, and if not, I will know." He talks with Abraham, who pleads for sparing the wicked city, beats Abraham in argument, and, "as soon as he had left communing with Abraham," "the Lord went his way."

God appears to men visibly—to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and to Moses. He talks with all those persons in the most familiar way, in the Hebrew tongue: "The Lord talked to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh with his brother." He makes a bargain with Abraham, then with

Jacob and his children. It is solemnly ratified, for good and sufficient consideration on both sides. It is for value received: God conveys a great quantity of land to Abraham and his posterity, and guarantees the title; they are to circumcise all their male children eight days after birth; that is the jocular tenure by which they hold Palestine. God swears that he will keep his covenant, and though sometimes sorely tempted to break it, he yet adheres to the oath:

“And though he promise to his loss,  
He makes the promise good.”

He dines with Abram, coming in unexpected one day. Abraham kills a calf, “tender and good.” Sarah makes cakes of fine meal, extemporaneously baked on the hearth. Butter and milk are set forth, and God, with two attendants, makes his dinner!

While Moses was travelling from Midian to Egypt, the Lord met him at a tavern, and “sought to kill him,” but Moses’s wife circumcised her son before God’s eyes—so God let the “bloody husband” go.

He is partial, hates the heathen, takes good care of the Jews, not because they deserve it, but because he will not break his covenant. He is jealous; he writes it with his own finger in the ten commandments: “I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God;” and again, “*Jehovah*, his name is jealous.” He is vain also, and longs for the admiration of the heathen, and is dissuaded by Moses from destroying the Israelites when they had provoked him, lest the Egyptians should hear of it, and his fame should suffer.

Look at this account of one of God’s transactions in Numb. xiv. “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they.” And Moses replied: “Then the Egyptians shall hear it, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of the land;” they will say, “Because the Lord was not able to bring the people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness;” “Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people!” So, lest the Gentiles should think him weak, Jehovah lets the Hebrews off for a time, and instead of destroying millions of men at once, he spreads their ruin over several years. “In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die!”

He is capricious, revengeful, exceedingly ill-tempered; he has fierce wrath and cruelty; he is angry even with the Hebrews, and one day says to Moses, “Take all the heads of the people (that is the leading men, the citizens of eminent gravity), and hang them up before the Lord against the sun.”

Once God is angry with the people who murmur against Moses, and says to him, “Get you up from among this congregation, that I may con-

sume them as in a moment!" Moses is more merciful than his God; he must appease this Deity, who is "a consuming fire." So he tells Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun!" Aaron does so, and the plague was stayed, though not till the fury of the Lord had killed fourteen thousand and seven hundred men! (Numb. xvi. 41-50). God hates some of the nations with relentless wrath; Abraham interferes, pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses for the Israelites, but nobody cares for the rest of the people, or burns incense for them, and so God says, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." All the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites, are to be rooted out—seven nations, each of which was more numerous than the Hebrews: "Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them," saith the Lord. The Canaanites and Moabites were kindred of the Hebrews, of the same ethnologic tribe, but they could not enter into the congregation of the Lord unto the tenth generation!

This God—powerful, terrible, partial, jealous, often ill-tempered, wrathful, cruel, bloody—is to be worshipped with sacrifice, the blood of bulls and goats, with costly spectacles by the priesthood, who sacrifice to him in a special place, at particular times; and God gives the most minute directions how all this shall be done, but he is not to be served in any other way, at any other place.

Such seems to have been the conception of God with the leading minds of the Hebrews at the beginning of their national existence, or at the later day when the early books were deceitfully compiled. Now see how much they outgrew it at a later day.

The highest Old Testament idea of God you find in the Proverbs and the later Psalms, which were written only four or five hundred years after the promulgation of those extraordinary documents which I have just quoted. In these God is represented as all-wise, and always present everywhere. You all remember that exquisite Psalm, the cxxxixth, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" There God is unchangeable; his eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; no thought can be withheld from him. What grand and beautiful conceptions of God are there in Psalms ciii., civ., cvii.! So in almost the whole of that admirable collection, which is the prayer-book of Christendom to-day, and will be till some man with greater poetic genius, united with the tenderest piety, such as poets seldom feel, shall come, and, in the language of earth, sing the songs of the Infinite God.

There is a great change also in the manner of worship. At first it was a mere external act—offering sacrifice, a bull, a goat, a lamb; nay, God

commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, and the father is about to comply, but the Deity changes his own mind and prevents the killing of the boy. Listen to this from Psalm li., and see what a change there is: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness, according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Look at this from Hosea: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offering." Or this of Micah: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" What a progress from the early times! But even to the last book of the Old Testament there is the same wrath of God. The world has seen no such cursing as that of the Jews in the name of Jehovah. Take the sixt Psalm, and I will defy the hardest of you to wish worse and crueler things than the author imprecates against his enemies:—"Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the stranger spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. . . . As he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones," vs. 6-15, 18. I quote these because they are seldom read, while the devout and holy portions of the Psalms are familiar to all men. In Bibles which have laid on the pulpit for fifty years, and those read in private from generation to generation, the best parts are worn out with continuous use, while the evil passages are still fresh and new.

I think no Old Testament Jew ever got beyond this: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau," (Mal. i. 2, 3.) A Psalmist speaks of God as pursuing his enemies with wrath "like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine." The Lord God of Israel says to his people, "I myself will fight against you with an out-

stretched hand, and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath." "I have set my face against this city for evil and not for good." If they do not repent, his "fury will go forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it;" and "this house shall become a desolation."

Here is a terrible picture of the Hebrew God, sketched by the hand of a great master some time after the Babylonian Captivity. There had been a great battle between the Edomites and Hebrews; God comes back as a conqueror, the people see him, and the following dialogue takes place:

*People* :—Who is this that cometh from Edom ?

In scarlet garments from Bozrah ?

This that is glorious in his apparel,

Proud in the greatness of his strength ?

*Jehovah* :—I that proclaim deliverance,  
And am mighty to save.

*People* :—Wherefore is thine apparel red,  
And thy garments like those of one that treadeth the wine-vat ?

*Jehovah* :—I have trodden the wine-vat alone,  
And of the nations there was none with me.  
And I trod them in mine anger,  
And I trampled them in my fury,  
So that their life-blood was sprinkled upon my garments,  
And I have stained all my apparel.  
For the day of vengeance was in my heart—  
I trod down the nations in my anger;  
I crushed them in my fury,  
And spilled their blood upon the ground."\*

"Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits," says the proverb; it is not less true of nations than of men. The religious, but idolatrous Jews met a monotheistic people in their captivity in Babylon, and came back with better ideas. Yet much of the old theological evil lingered still. Ezra, Nehemiah, and the author of the book of Daniel, devout men, intensely bigoted, knew only "the great and dreadful God;" that is the name the last of them calls Jehovah. But from the first five books of the Old Testament to the Proverbs and later Psalms there is great progress.

II. You come to the New Testament, and here you do not find much literary excellence in the writers. Wild flowers of exquisite beauty spring up around the feet of Jesus; only in the Revelation do you find any thing which indicates a large talent for literature, neither the nature which is born in the man of genius, nor the art which comes from exquisite culture. The Fourth Gospel was writ, apparently, by some Alexandrian Greek, a man of nice philosophic culture and fancy. Paul had great power of deductive logic. A grand poetic imagination appears in that remarkable book, the Apoca-

\* Dr. Noyes's Translation.

lypse. But, taken as a whole, in respect to literary art, the New Testament is greatly inferior to the best parts of the Apocrypha and Old Testament. It compares with Job, the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon, as the works of the early Quakers compare with Hooker, Taylor, Herbert, Cudworth and Milton; and yet, spite of the lack of culture, literary art, and poetic genius, in the New Testament as in Fox, Nayler, Penn, and other early Quakers, there is a spirit not to be found in the well-born and learned writers who went before.

1. In the New Testament, look first at the conception which Jesus has of God. I shall take it only from the first three Gospels. In that according to Matthew I think we have his early notion of God. He calls him *Father*. The same word is now and then applied to God in the Old Testament, but there I think it means only Father to the Jews, not to other nations. But it seems that some of the Greeks and Jews in Jesus's own time applied it to him, as if he were the father of all men. As Jesus makes the Lord's Prayer out of the litanies which were current in his time, so he uses the common name for the Deity in the common sense. With him God alone is good, and our Father which is in heaven is perfect. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He pities and forgives the penitent, as in that remarkable story of the Prodigal Son. With what tender love does Jesus say, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repented, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance." Such noble thoughts come out in that time as "shines a good deed in a naughty world." But what becomes of the impenitent wicked? God has no love for them; they shall go into everlasting punishment. So alongside of God there is a Devil, and to the left hand of heaven, there is a dreadful, fiery, endless hell, whither a broad way leads down, and the wide gates stand ever open, and many there be who go in therewith.

At first Jesus limited his teachings to the Jews; he would not take the children's bread and give it unto the dogs; he declared that not a jot or tittle of the Mosaic ceremonial law should ever fail; he told his disciples to keep all that the Scribes and Pharisees commanded, because they sat in Moses's seat. But by-and-by he nobly breaks with Judaism, violates the ritual law, puts his new wine into new bottles. With admirable depth of intuitive sight he sums up religion in one word, *Love*—love to God with all the heart, and to one's neighbor as himself. Fear of God seldom appears in the words of Jesus. Fear is the religion of the Old Testament. Mercy is better than sacrifice. Men go up to heaven for righteousness and philanthropy, and no question is asked about creed or form. Other men go down to hell for ungodliness; and no straining at a gnat would ever save him who would swallow down a whole camel of iniquity. Human literature cannot show a dearer example of tenderness to a penitent wicked

man than you see in the story of the Prodigal Son, which yet the first Evangelist rejected, and two others left without mention.

All nationality disappears before Jesus. His model man is a Samaritan. We hear that word commonly used, and do not understand that the Jews hated a Samaritan as the old New England Federalists hated a Jacobin, as the British used to hate a Frenchman, or as a Southern slaveholder hates a Black Republican to-day. Depend upon it, it created as much sensation amongst men who heard it when Jesus told this story of the Good Samaritan, as it would in Virginia to have some one represent a Negro as superior to all the "first families" of the State, on account of some great charity that he had done.

I do not find that Jesus altered the common idea of God which he found. He was too intent on practical righteousness to attend to that. Besides, he was cut off when but about thirty years of age; had he lived longer, it may be that he would have reformed the popular notion of God; for there are some things in the words that drop like honey from his lips which to me indicate a religious feeling far beyond his thought.

2. In the writings of Paul you find more speculation about God than with Jesus; for Paul was mainly a theological man, as Jesus was mainly a pious and philanthropic man. Jesus could start a great religious movement; Paul could make a theology out of his hints, and found a sect. But the most important characteristic of Paul's idea of God is this: God's wrath was against all ungodliness in Jew or Gentile, and he was as accessible to Gentile as to Jew. Nationality vanishes; all men are one in Christ Jesus; God is God to all, to punish the wicked and reward the righteous who have faith in Christ; the Jews are as wicked as the rest of mankind, and are to be equally saved by faith in Christ, and by that alone. Paul's Christ is not the Jesus of History, but a mythological being he conjured up from his own fancy. He says that the invisible God is clearly made known by the visible material world, and conscience announces God's law to the Gentiles as effectually as revelation declares it to the Jews. That is a great improvement on the Old Testament idea of God, as presented even in the Psalms.

3. In the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle attributed to John—both incorrectly attributed to him—the idea of God goes higher than elsewhere in the New Testament. God is mainly love. He dwells in the souls of men who love each other and love him, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, not only in Jerusalem, but anywhere and everywhere. Perfect love casteth out fear.

This God has an Only-begotten Son, to whom he has given the Spirit without measure, put all things under his hand; he who believes on the Son shall have everlasting life, but he who does not believe on the Son shall not see life. Christ's commandment is that they love one another,

and to those God will give another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who shall abide with believers forever; nay, Christ will manifest himself to them.

But this God has created a Devil, who will send all unbelievers into endless torment.

Thus ends the last book of the New Testament. What a change from Genesis to the Fourth Gospel! What a difference between the God who eats veal and fresh bread with Abraham, and commands him to make a burnt offering of his own son, who conveys all Palestine on such a jocular tenure, and the God whom no man hath seen at any time; who is Spirit and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; who is love, and who dwells with all loving and believing souls! There are I know not how many hundred years between the two—what a series of revolutions! what vast progress of mankind had filled up that brief period of time!

But the idea of God which you gather from the Bible is quite unsatisfactory to a thoughtful and deeply religious man to-day. In the Old Testament there is no God who loves the Gentiles; he made the world for the Jews; all others are only servants—means, not ends. This being so, the Hebrew thought himself the only favorite of God; his patriotism became intense contempt for all other nations—was a part of his religion. In the New Testament, the God whom even Jesus sets before mankind has no love for the wicked; there is no Providence for them; at the last judgment he sends them all to hell, bottomless, endless, without hope; their worm dieth not, their fire is not quenched; no Lazarus from Abraham's bosom will ever give Dives a single drop of water to cool his tongue, tormented in that flame. Jesus tells of God, also of the Devil; of heaven, with its eternal blessedness awaiting every righteous man, and of the eternal torment not less open and waiting for every one who dies impenitent. Paul narrows still more this love of God towards men; it includes only such as have faith in Christ; no man is to be saved who does not believe in Paul's idea of Christ. The author of the Apocalypse constricts it still further yet; he would cast out Paul from heaven; Paul is called a "liar," "of the Synagogue of Satan," and other similar names. The Fourth Gospel limits salvation to such as believe the author's theory of Christ, that he was a God, and the only-begotten Son of God, an idea which none of the three Evangelists, nor Paul, nor James, nor Simon Peter, seems ever to have entertained. I think that Jesus never held such a doctrine as what Paul and the writer of the Fourth Gospel makes indispensable to salvation.

To the Jews every Gentile seemed an outcast from God's providence. To the early followers of Jesus all unbelievers were also outcasts; "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be

damned." I find no adequate reason for thinking Jesus ever spoke these words, found only in the doubtful addition to the second canonical Gospel. Yet there seems evidence enough to show that Jesus himself really taught that ghastly doctrine, that a great wickedness unrepented of entailed eternal damnation on an immortal soul! Paul says human love never fails; it suffers long and is kind, and yet both he and the man whom he half worshipped, teach that God has no love for the wicked man who dies in his impenitence; endless misery is his only destination. Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New do you find the God of infinite perfection, infinite power, wisdom, justice, love; it is always a limited God, a Deity with imperfect wisdom, justice, love; God with a Devil beside him, the created fiend getting the victory over his Creator! The Bible does not know that Infinite God, who is immanent in the World of Matter and Man, and also lives in these flowers, in yonder stars, in every drop of blood in our veins; who works everywhere by law, a constant mode of operation of natural power in Matter and in Man. It is never the dear God who is responsible for the welfare of all and each, a Father so tender that he loves the wickedest of men as no mortal mother can love her only child. Does this surprise you? When mankind was a child, he thought as a child, and understood as a child; when he becomes a man he will put away childish things.

How full of encouragement is the fact of such a growth in man's conception of God, and his mode of serving him! In the beginning of Hebrew history, great power, great self-esteem, and great destructiveness, are the chief qualities that men ascribe to God. Abraham would serve him by sacrificing Isaac; Joshua, a great Hebrew filibuster, by the butchery of whole nations of men, sparing the cattle, which he might keep as property, but not the women and children. This was counted service of God, and imputed to such marauders for righteousness. In the notion of God set forth in the Fourth Gospel and the First Epistle ascribed to John, it is love which preponderates, and by love only are men to serve God. With Jesus it is only goodness which admits men to the kingdom of heaven, and there is no question asked about the nation, creed, or form; but this sweet benediction is pronounced: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me;" "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

Shall you and I stop where the New Testament did? We cannot, if we would, and it is impious to try. What if Moses had been content with the Egyptian chaos of a Deity, "where every clove of garlic was a god;" what if Jesus had never broke with the narrow bounds of Judaism; what if Paul had been content with "such as were Apostles before him," and had stuck at new moons, full moons, circumcision and other abominations,

which neither he nor his fathers were able to bear ; where would have been the Christian Church, and where the progress of mankind ? No, we shall not stop ! It would be contrary to the spirit of Moses, and still more contrary to the spirit of Jesus, to attempt to arrest the theological and religious progress of mankind.

God in Genesis represents the conception of the babyhood of humanity. Manhood demands a different conception. All round us lies the World of Matter, this vast world above us and about us and beneath ; it proclaims the God of Nature ; flower speaking unto flower, star quiring unto star ; a God who is resident therein, his law never broke. In us is a World of Consciousness, and as that mirror is made clearer by civilization, I look down and behold the Natural Idea of God, Infinite Cause and Providence, Father and Mother to all that are. Into our reverent souls God will come as the morning light into the bosom of the opening rose. Just in proportion as we are faithful, we shall be inspired therewith, and shall frame "conceptions equal to the soul's desires," and then in our practice keep those "heights which the soul is competent to win."

## SERMON II.

### THE ECCLESIASTICAL CONCEPTION OF GOD, AND ITS RELATION TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS WANTS OF MAN.

The great and dreadful God.—*DANIEL ix. 4.*

Our Father which art in heaven.—*MATTHEW vi. 9.*

In the Religion of civilized man there are three things :—Piety—the love of God, the Sentimental part; Morality—obedience to God's natural laws, the Practical part; and Theology—thoughts about God and Man and their relation, the Intellectual part. The Theology will have great influence on the Piety and the Morality, a true Theology helping the normal development of Religion, which a false Theology hinders. There are two methods of creating a Theology,—a scheme of doctrines about God and Man, and the relation between them, viz.: the Ecclesiastical and the Philosophical.\*

The various sects which make up the Christian Church pursue the Ecclesiastical method. They take the Bible for a miraculous and infallible revelation from God—in all matters containing the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—and thence derive their doctrines, Catholic, Protestant, Trinitarian, Unitarian, Damnationist or Salvationist. Of

\* See Mr. Parker's Sermon of "False and True Theology."—*February, 1858.*

course they follow that method in forming the Ecclesiastical Conception of God, in which the Christian sects mainly agree. They take the whole of the Bible, from Genesis to the Fourth Gospel, as God's miraculous affidavit; they gather together all which it says about God, and from that make up the Ecclesiastical Conception as a finality. The Biblical sayings are taken for God's deposition as to the facts of his nature, character, plan, modes of operation—God's word, his last word; they are a finality—all the evidence in the case; nothing is to be added thereto, and naught taken thence away. Accordingly the statement of a writer in the half-savage age of a ferocious people is just as valuable, true, and obligatory for all time, as that of a refined, enlightened, religious man in a civilized age and nation; for they are all equally God's testimony in the case, his miraculous deposition; God puts himself on his *voir dire*, and it is of no consequence which justice of revelation records the affidavit of the Divine Deponent. The deposition is alike perfect and complete, whether attested by an anonymous and half-civilized Hebrew filibuster, or by a refined and religious Christian philosopher. The statement that God ate veal at Abraham's, or that he sought to kill Moses in a tavern, is just as true and important as this, that "God is love." It is said in the Old Testament that the Lord is a "consuming fire;" he is "angry with the wicked every day," and keeps his anger for ever; that he hates Esau; that he gives cruel commands, like that in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, forbidding all religious progress; that he orders the butchery of millions of innocent men, including women and children; that he comes back from the destruction of Edom red with blood, as described in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah. In the New Testament he is called Father; it is said that he is Love, that he goes out and meets the returning prodigal a great ways off, and welcomes him with large rejoicing.

Now, say the Churches, all these statements are true, and the Christian believer must accept them all. Reason is not to sift and cross-examine the Biblical testimony, rejecting this as false and including that as true; for the whole of this evidence and each part of it is God's affidavit, and does not require a cross-examining, sifting, amending. We are not to reconcile it to us, but us to it; and if it conflict with reason and conscience, we should give them up. All the Bible, says this theory, is the inspired Word of God, and one part is just as much inspired as another, for there are no degrees of inspiration therein; each statement by itself is perfect, and the whole complete. The test of inspiration is not in man; it is not Truth for things reasonable, nor Justice for things moral, nor Love for things affectional. The test is wholly outside of man; it is a Miracle—that is, the report of a miracle; and so what contradicts the universal human conscience is to be accepted just as readily as what agrees with the moral instinct and reflection of all human kind. In the third century Ter-

tullian, a hot-headed African Bishop, said, "I believe, because it is impossible ;" that is, the thing cannot be, and therefore I believe it is ! It has been a maxim in ecclesiastical theology ever since ; without it both Transubstantiation and the Trinity would fall to the ground, with many a doctrine more. I think Lord Bacon was an unbeliever in the popular ecclesiastical doctrines of his time ; he would derive all science from the observation of nature and reflection thereon ; but he left this maxim to have Eminent Domain in Theology ! It was enough for him to break utterly with the Philosophy of the Schools ; he would not also quarrel against the Theology of the Churches : thereby he lost his scientific character, but kept his ecclesiastical reputation.

Joshua, the son of Nun, was a Hebrew filibuster, with a half-civilized troop of ferocious men following him ; he conquered a country, butchered the men, women, and children ; and he gives us such a picture of God as you might expect from a Pequot Indian in the days of our fathers. It is taught in the Churches that Joshua's statement about God is just as trustworthy as the sublime words in the New Testament, ascribed to John or Jesus, and far more valuable than the deepest intuitions, and the grandest generalizations of the most cultivated, best educated, and most religious of men to-day ! The Christian Churches do not derive their conception of God from the World of Observation about us, or the World of Consciousness within us, but from the "Book of Revelation," as they call that collection from the works of some hundred writers, mostly anonymous, and all from remote ages ; and they tell us that the teachings of Joshua are of as much value as the teachings of Jesus himself, far more than those of Fenelon or Channing.

Now from such facts, and by such a method, the Christian sects have formed their notion of God, which is common to the Greek, the Latin, and the Teutonic Churches ; only a few sects have departed therefrom, and as they are but insignificant in numbers, and have had scarcely any influence in forming the ecclesiastical conception of God, so I shall omit all reference to them and their opinions.

To-day I shall not speak of the ecclesiastical Arithmetic of God, only of the Ethios thereof ; not of God according to the category of number—the quantitative distribution of Deity into personalities ; only of the character of God by the category of substance—the qualitative kind of Deity, for that is still the same, whether conceived of in one person, in three, or in three million, just as the qualitative force of an army of three hundred thousand soldiers is still the same, whether you count it as one corps or as three.

Look beneath the mere words of theology, at the things which they mean, and you find in general that the ecclesiastical conception of God

does not include Infinite Perfection. It embraces all the true and good things from the most religious and enlightened writers of the Bible, but it also contains all the ill and false things which were uttered by the most rude and ferocious ; one is counted just as true and valuable as the other. Accordingly God is really represented as a limited being, exceedingly imperfect, having all the contradictions which you find between Genesis and the Fourth Gospel ; he is not infinite in any one attribute. I know the theological language predicates infinite perfection, but the theological facts affirm exceeding imperfection. Look at this in several details.

1. God is not represented as Omnipresent. When the theologian says, "God is everywhere," he does not mean that God is everywhere always, as he is anywhere sometimes ; not that he is at this minute present in this meeting-house, and in the air which my hand clasps, as he was in the Hebrew Holy of Holies when Solomon ended his inauguration prayer, as he always is in some place called the Heaven of Heavens. There are degrees of the Divine Presence ; he is more there and less here. Some spots he occupies by his essence, others only potentially. He was creationally present with all his personal essence at the making of the world, but only providentially present with his instrumental power, not his personal essence, at the governing of the world. Thus the Queen of England, by her power, is present in all Great Britain and the British possessions, while by her person she occupies only a single apartment of the Palace of St. James in London, sitting in only one chair at a time. So it is taught that God must intervene miraculously to do his work : must come into a place where he was not before, and which he will vacate soon. So the actual, personal, essential and complete presence of God is the very rarest exception in all places save Heaven. He is instantial only in Heaven, exceptional everywhere else. He is not universally immanent, residing in all matter, all spirit, at every time, working according to law, by a constant mode of operation and in all the powers of matter and man, which are derived from him and are not possible without him ; but he comes in occasionally and works by miracle. He is a non-resident God, who is present in a certain place vicariously, by attorney, and only on great occasions comes there in his proper person. That is the ecclesiastical notion of Omnipresence.

2. He is not All-Powerful, except in the ideal Heaven which he permanently occupies by his complete and personal presence. On earth he is restricted by Man, who thwarts his plans every day and grieves his heart, and still more by the Devil, who continually thwarts his Creator. I know the ecclesiastical doctrine says that God is omnipotent, but ecclesiastical history represents him as trying to make the Hebrews an obedient people, and never effecting it ; as continually worrying over that little fraction of mankind, "rising up early and speaking" to them, but the crooked would

not be made straight. Nay, he is unable to keep the Christian Church without spot or wrinkle for a single generation, charm he never so wisely; but Paul fell out with such as were apostles before him, and the seamless ecclesiastical coat is roughly rent in twain betwixt the two!

3. He is not All-Wise. He does not know how his own creation will work. He finished the world, and found that his one man, running alone, did not prosper; it was necessary to make a woman, to help him; she was an afterthought. Her first step ruins the man she was meant to serve; and God is surprised at the disobedience. He must alter things to meet this unexpected emergency; he grows wiser and wiser by continual experiment.

4. He is not All-Righteous. He does great wrong to the Egyptians, for he hardens Pharaoh's heart, so that he may have an excuse for putting the king and people to death. He does injustice to the Canaanites, whom he butchers by Joshua; he provides a punishment altogether disproportionate to the offences of men, and will make them suffer forever for the sin committed by their mythological ancestor, six thousand years before you and I were born; he creates souls by the million, only to make them perish everlasting. In the whole course of human history, you cannot find a tyrant, murderer, kidnapper, who is so unjust as God is represented by the ecclesiastical theology.

5. He is not All-Loving. Of the people before Christ, he loved none but Jews; he gave no other any revelation, and without that, they must perish everlasting! Since Jesus he loves none but Christians, and will save no more; the present heathen are to die the second death; and of Christians he loves none but Church-members. Nay, the Catholics will have it, that he hates everybody out of the Roman Church, while the stricter Protestants retaliate this favor upon the Catholics themselves. Nay, they deny salvation to all Unitarians and Universalists, to the one because they declare that the man Jesus was not God the Creator; and to the other because they say that God the Father is not bad enough to damn any man forever and ever. You remember that scarcely was Dr. Channing cold in his coffin, before orthodox newspapers rung with the intelligence that he was doubtless then suffering the pangs of eternal damnation, because he had "denied the Lord that bought him." You know the damnation pronounced on old Dr. Ballou, simply because he said men were brethren, and the God of earth and heaven is too good-hearted to create anybody for the purpose of crunching him into hell forever and ever. According to some strict sectarians, God loves none but the elect—an exceedingly small number. It has been the doctrine of the Christian Church for fifteen or sixteen hundred years that God will reject from heaven all babies newly-born who die without baptism; the sprinkling of infants was designed to save these little ones, who, as Jesus thought, needed no salvation, but were already of the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, to save the souls of

children ready to perish without ecclesiastical baptism, the Catholic Church mercifully allows doctors, nurses, midwives, servants, anybody, to baptize a child newly born, by throwing water in its face, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that saves the little thing. But the doctrine of infant damnation follows logically from the first principles of the ecclesiastical theology. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned!"

6. He is not All-Holy, perfectly faithful to himself. He is capricious and variable; men can wheedle him into their favorite plans; now by penitence or a certain belief, they can induce God to remove the consequences of their wicked deeds; and the effects of a long life of wickedness will all at once be miraculously wiped clean off from the man's character; he will take the blackest of sinners and wash him white in the blood of the Lamb, and "in five minutes he shall be made as good a Christian as he could become by fifty years of the most perfect piety and morality." Since God is thus changeable, men think they can alter his plan by their words, can induce him to send rain when they want it, or to "stay the bottles of heaven" at their request, to check disease, to curse a bad man, or to pervert and confound the intellect of a thinking man. Hence comes the strange phenomenon which you sometimes see of a nation assembling in the churches, and asking God to crush to the ground another people at war with them; two years ago you saw Englishmen bending their knees in the name of Christ, to ask God to blast the Russians at Sebastopol, and the Russians bending their knees and in the same name asking God to sink the British ships in the depths of the Black Sea!

Put all these things together—God is not represented as a perfect Creating Cause, who makes all things right at first; nor a perfect Preserving Providence, who administers all things well, and will bring all out right at last. Even his essential presence is only an exception in the world, here for a moment, and then long withdrawn. According to the ecclesiastical conception, God transcends man in power and wisdom, but is immensely inferior to the average of men in justice and benevolence; nay, in hate and malignity he transcends the very worst man that the very worst man could conceive of in his heart!

I. Now, this idea of God is not adequate to the purposes of Science. To explain the World of Matter, the naturalist wants a sufficient power which is always there, acting by a constant mode of operation; not irregular, vanishing, acting by fits and starts; but continuous, certain, reliable; an intelligent power which acts by law, not caprice and miracle. No other God is adequate Cause of the Universe, or of its action for a single hour.

But the Christian Church knows no such God, for all the Biblical depositions concerning him, all the pretended affidavits whence it has

made its conception of God, came from men who had no thought of a general law of matter or of mind, and no notion of a God who acted by a constant mode of operation, and who was the indwelling Cause and Providence of all things that are. Just so far as any scientific thinker departs from that limited idea of God, who comes and goes and works by miracle, so far does he depart from the ecclesiastical theology of Christendom. The actual facts of the Universe are not reconcilable with what the ecclesiastical theology teaches about God. This has become apparent, step by step, in the last three centuries.

Galileo reported the facts of astronomic nature just as they were. The Roman Church must silence her philosopher, or else revolutionize her notion of God. Had not she God's own affidavit that he stopped the sun and moon a whole day, to give Joshua time for butchery of men, women, and children? would she allow a philosopher to contradict her with nothing but the Universe on his side? He must swear the earth stands still. "And yet it does move though!"

Geologists relate the facts of the universe as they find them in the crust of the earth. The Churches complain that these facts are inconsistent with the story in Genesis. "We have," say they, "God's deposition that he made the Universe in six days, rested on the seventh, and was refreshed! What is the testimony of the rocks and the stars, to the anonymous record on parchment, or the printed English Bible?" So the geologist also has a bad name in the Churches, many equivocate, and some lie.

For the history of the heavens and earth, theologians would rely on the word of a man whose name even they know nothing of, and reject the testimony of the Universe itself, where the footprints of the Creator are yet so plain and deeply set. Zoologists find evidence, as they think, that the human race has had several distinct centres of origination; that men were created in many places: and a great outcry is at once raised. Such facts are inconsistent with the ecclesiastical idea of God! So, to learn the structure of the heavens, the earth, or of mankind, you must not go to the heavens, the earth, or mankind; you must go to the Book of Genesis, and if the facts of the Universe contradict the anonymous record therein, then you must break with the Universe and agree with the minister, for the actual testimony of things is worth nothing in comparison with the words of a Hebrew writer whom nobody knows!

The great obstacle to the advancement of science, nay, to the diffusion of knowledge, is not the poverty of mankind, not the lack of industry, talent, genius amongst men of science; but it is the ecclesiastical conception of God. Not a step can be taken in astronomy, geology, zoology, but it separates a man from that notion. The ecclesiastical conception of God being thus utterly inadequate to the purposes of science, philosophic men turn off from the theology of Christendom; and some, it is said, become atheists. Look at the scientific men of England, France, and Germany,

for proof of this. In America there is no considerable class of scientific and learned men, who stand close together, write books for each other, and so make a little public of their own; so here the scientific man does not stand in a little green-house of philosophy as in Europe, where he is sheltered from public opinion, lives freely, and expands his flowers in an atmosphere congenial to his natural growth, but he is exposed to all the rude blasts of the press, the parlor, and the meeting-house; so is he more cautious than his congeners and equivalents in Europe, and does not commonly tell what he thinks; nay, sometimes tells what he does not think, lest he should lose his public reputation amongst bigoted men! To this there are some very honorable exceptions; scientific men who do not count it a part of their business to prop up a popular error, but who know society has a right to demand that they tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. But if you will take the hundred foremost men of science in all Christendom who are not ministers, I do not think that ten of them have any belief in the common ecclesiastical conception of God. Some have better—nay, a true idea of God, but dare not divulge it; and some, alas! seem to have no notion at all. Accordingly, men of science turn from theology; some become atheists, and all lose much from lack of a satisfactory idea of God. You all know what clerical complaints are made of the infidelity and atheism of scientific men. Three hundred years ago the Church suspected doctors, and invented this proverb:—"As many doctors, so many atheists;" because the doctors knew facts irreconcilable with the ecclesiastical theology. I think the charge of atheism grossly unjust, when it is brought against the great body of scientific men; but where it is true, it ought to be remembered that in the last two hundred and fifty years the Christian Church has had no idea of God adequate to the purposes of science, and fit for a philosopher to accept; and if it be so, will you blame the philosopher for rejecting what would only disturb his processes? The cause of the philosopher's atheism often lies at the Church's door, and not in the scholar's study.

II. But this ecclesiastical conception of God is as inadequate to the purposes of Religion, as of Science. In religious consciousness we all want a God whom we can absolutely rely upon; who is always at hand, not merely separate and one side from the World of Matter or the World of Man. We want a deity who acts now, and is the Infinite God, who desires the best of possible things for each man, who knows the best of possible things, and has will and power to bring about the best of possible things, and that for all persons. We want a God all-powerful, all-wise, all-just, all-loving, all-faithful; a perfect Creator; a perfect Provider, who will be just to each of his children. I put it to each one of you—thought-fullest or least-thinking—is there one of you who will be content with a God who does not come up to your highest conception of power, wisdom, jus-

tice, love, and holiness? Not one of you will be content to rely on less! You must falsify your nature before you can do it. But according to the ecclesiastical conception, God is the most capricious, unjust, unreliable of all possible beings. Look at this old and venerable doctrine of eternal damnation, believed by all the Christian sects, save the Universalists, Unitarians, and Spiritualists—not yet a sect—who make at the most some four or five millions out of the two hundred and fifty or sixty millions of Christendom. This is the doctrine:—God is angry with mankind, and will burn the greater part of them in hell, forever and ever. Why is “his wrath so hot against us?”

1. The Jews are God’s ancient covenant people; with them he made a bargain, sworn to on both sides: it was for a good and sufficient consideration, value received by each party; he commanded them to observe the Mosaic form of religion forever; if any prophet shall come, working never so many miracles, and teach them a different conception of God, they must put him to death, and all his followers, with their wives, their children, and their cattle. (Deut. xiii.) But now all these “chosen people” are to be damned forever because they do not believe the theology of Paul and Jesus, whom the Divine law commands the Jews to slay with the edge of the sword for teaching that theology. So God commands the Jews to kill every man among them who shall teach the Christian doctrine, and yet will damn them for not believing it.

2. The Heathen also are to be damned because they have no faith in Christ, no belief in the popular theology of the Catholic or Protestant sects. But that theology is unreasonable, and thoughtful, unprejudiced men cannot believe it; besides that, the greater part of the Heathens never heard of such doctrines, or of Christ; still God will damn them, millions by millions, to eternal torment, because they have not believed what was never preached to them, what they never heard they must believe. Three hundred years ago Spanish Jesuits preached the doctrine of eternal damnation to the heathen at Japan, who asked of the missionaries, “Is it possible that God will damn men forever?” “Certainly, without doubt,” was the reply. “And if a man dies who has not heard of these things before, will God damn him forever?” “Yes,” was the answer. The whole multitude fell on their faces and wept bitterly and long, and would not believe it. Do you blame them for casting those priests from the island, and saying, “Let the salt sea separate us from the Christian world forever.”

3. Then the Christians themselves are not certain of their salvation. The Catholics are the majority, and they say God will damn all the Protestants; the Protestants say the same of the Catholics. The ecclesiastical idea of God in both represents him as ready enough to damn either; and if the first principle of the Catholic Church be true, no Protestant can be

saved; and if the first principle of the Protestant Church be true, then every Catholic is sure of damnation and nought besides.

See how the Protestants dispose of one another.

(1.) All "unconverted" and positively wicked men are to be damned; God has no love for them, only hate.

(2.) All "unconverted" men, not positively wicked; they have no salvation in them; they may be the most pious men in the world, the most moral men, but their own religion cannot save them. They must have "faith,"—that is belief in the ecclesiastical theology—and be Church-members; that is, they must believe as Dr. Banbury believes, and be voted into some little company called a Church, at the Old South or the New North, or some other conventicle.

(3.) New-born babies not baptized must be shut out from the kingdom of heaven, if not included in the kingdom of hell; such has been the doctrine of the Christian Church from the time of Justin Martyr, who I think first broached it seventeen hundred years ago, and it follows with unavoidable logic from the ecclesiastical notion of God and the ecclesiastical method of salvation. So Jesus must have made a great mistake when he took babies in his arms, and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;"—he ought to have said, "Suffer *baptized* children to come unto me," &c.

Now what confidence can you have in such a God, so unjust, so unloving, so cruel, and so malignant? I just now said that God is represented as transcending men in hate and malignity. Look at the matter carefully, narrowing the thing down to the smallest point. Suppose there are now a thousand million persons on the earth, and that only one shall be damned; and suppose that some day a hundred years hence, all the nine hundred and ninety-nine million, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine of us are gathered in the kingdom of heaven, enjoying all the blessedness that Divine love can bestow on the vast faculties of man, still further enhanced by the first taste of immortal life; suppose that intelligence is brought to all and each of us that one man is miserable, languishing in eternal fire, to be there forever; suppose we are told that a globe of sand, big as this earth, hangs there before his comprehensive eye, and once in a thousand years a single atom is loosened and falls off, and he shall suffer the crudest torment till, grain by grain, millennium after millennium, that whole globe is consumed and passed away; and yet then he shall be no nearer the end of his agony than when he first felt the smart. Suppose we are told it was the worst man of all the earth, that it was a murderer, a violator of virgins, a pirate, a kidnapper, a traitorous wretch, who, in the name of Democracy, sought to establish a despotism in America, to crush out the fairest hopes of political freedom which the sun ever shone

upon; or even it was an ecclesiastical hypocrite, with an atheistic heart, believing in no God, and loving no man, who, for the sake of power and ambition, sought to make men tremble at the ugly phantom of a wrathful Deity, and laid his unclean hands on the soul of man, and made that a source of terrible agony to mankind! When you are told that this man is plunged into hell for all time, is there a man who would not cry out against the hideous wrong, and scorn heaven offered by such a Deity? No! there is no murderer, no pirate, no violator of virgins, no New England kidnapper, no betrayer of his nation, no ecclesiastical hypocrite even, who would not reject it with scorn, and revolt against the injustice. But the ecclesiastical doctrine represents God as thus damning not one man, but millions of millions of men, the great majority of mankind, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand, and those, too, often the best, certainly the wisest and most loving and pious men! Do you wonder then, that thoughtful men, moral men, affectional men, and religious men turn off with scorn from this conception of God? I wonder not at all. The fact that the majority have not done so only shows how immensely powerful is this great religious instinct, which God meant should be Queen within us.

Let me do no injustice. I admit the many excellent qualities ascribed to God in the popular theology; but remember this, that as much as the noblest words of the New Testament add to the conception of God in the worst parts of the Old Testament, just so much also do the savage notions from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, from the baser Psalms, and the Prophets, take away from the Father who is in Heaven, the Spirit who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth! In this "alligation alternate" one chapter of the Old Testament can adulterate and spoil all the blessed oracles of the New. Jesus is set off against Joshua; the whole of the Fourth Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount, and many a blessed Parable, is nullified by a scrap from some ancient Jew who thought God was a consuming fire!

The Form of Religion demanded of men, in accordance with the ecclesiastical conception of God, certainly has many good things, but it is not natural Piety for its emotional part, the aboriginal love of God; nor natural Theology for its intellectual part, the natural Idea of God; nor natural Morality for its practical part, the normal use of every human faculty; but it is just the opposite of these; it has a sentiment against nature, thought against nature, practice against nature. In place of Love to God, with trust and hope, the most joyous of all emotions possible to man, it puts Fear of God, with doubt, and dread, and despair, the most miserable of all emotions; and in place of love to men, to all men, according as they need and we are able, it puts love only for your own little household of faith, and hate for all who cannot accept

your opinions; for out of the ecclesiastical conception of God comes not only the superstition which darkens man's face, clouds his mind, obscures his conscience, and brutalizes his heart, but also the persecution which reddens his hand with a brother's blood. The same spirit is in Boston to-day that in the middle ages was in Italy and Spain. Why does not it burn men now, as once it did in Italy, in Spain, and in Oxford? It only lacks the power; the wish and will are still the same. It lacks the axe and faggot, not the malignant will to smite and burn. Once it had the headsman at its command, who smote and silenced men; now it can only pray, not kill.

Such being the Ecclesiastical Conception of God, such the Ecclesiastical Religion, I do not wonder it has so small good influence on mankind. Men of science, not clerical, turn off from such a God, and such a form of religion. They are less wise and less happy; their science is the more imperfect, because they do not know the Infinite God of the Universe, the Absolute Religion. With reverence for a great mind, do I turn the grand studious pages of La Place and Von Humboldt, but not without mourning the absence of that religious knowledge of God, and that intimate trust in Him, which else would have planted their scientific garden with still grander beauty. I do not wonder that men of politics turn off from ecclesiastical religion, and are not warned from wickedness by its admonition, nor guided to justice and philanthropy by its counsels. Look at the politicians of America, England, France, all Christendom, and can you show me a single man of them in a high place who believes in the ecclesiastical conception of God, and in public ever dares appeal to the religious nature of man, and there expect to find justification of a great thought or a noble plan? No! when such politicians evoke the religious spirit, it is only to make men believe that it is a religious duty to obey any tyrant who seeks to plunder a nation, to silence the Press of France, to crush out the life from prostrate Italy and Spain, to send Americans kidnapping in Pennsylvania or New England. The great men of science have broke with the ecclesiastical notion of God; men of great moral sense will have nothing to do with a Deity so unjust; while the affectional and religious men, whose "primal virtues shine aloft as stars," whose deeds are "charities that heal, and soothe, and bless" the weary sons of men, they turn off with disgust from the ecclesiastical God, whose chief qualities are self-esteem, vanity, and destructiveness. One of the most enlightened writers of the New Testament says, "God is LOVE." "Yes," says the ecclesiastical theologian, "but he is also a CONSUMING FIRE; he gives all his love to the Christians who have faith in Christ, and turns all his wrath against the non-Christians who have no faith in Christ. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

If a man accepts this notion of God, he can never be certain of his own welfare hereafter; he may hope, he cannot be sure, for salvation does not

depend on a faithful use of talents or opportunities; but on right belief and right ritual. And when neither the intuitive nor the reflective faculties afford any test, who knows if his belief is right? The Jews are to be rejected for their faith in Moses and the Prophets. The Fourth Gospel makes Jesus say that all before him "were thieves and robbers;"—I think he never said it. Paul repudiated Peter, if not also James and John; he was a dissembler, and they only "seemed to be somewhat;" while the author of the Book of Revelation thrusts Paul out of heaven, consigning him to the synagogue of Satan. Now if Paul and Peter and James and John did not know what faith in Christ meant, and could not agree to live in the same Church, and sit in the same heaven, can you and I be sure of admittance there?

While the ecclesiastical conception of God is thus inadequate to a thoughtful man's religion, we are yet told that we must never reform this notion! There is a manifest progress in the conception of God in the Biblical books; but in the Christian Church we are told that there must be no further step; we must stop with Joshua. "Fear hath torment," says that anonymous, deep-hearted religious writer of the New Testament, seventeen hundred years ago; but "perfect love casts out fear." We are told we must not cast it out, but must have a notion of God, which we must fear! Shame on us! Mankind has made a mistake. We took a false step at the beginning. The dream which a half-savage Jew had of God we take for God's affidavit of his own character. We do not look on the World of Matter and Mind, to gather thence a natural idea of God, only at the statements of certain men who wrote seventeen hundred or three thousand years ago, men who did well enough for their time, not ours.

All round us lie the evidences against the ecclesiastical conception of God, within us are they yet more distinct. The great mistake of the Christian Church is its conception of God. Once it was the best the nations could either form or accept. To-day it is not worth while to try to receive it. It is inadequate for Science, either the philosophy of matter or man, explaining neither the condition, the history, nor yet the origin of one or the other. It is unfit for Religion; for Piety, its sentimental part—Theology, its intellectual part—Morality, its practical part. I cannot love an imperfect God, I cannot serve an imperfect God with perfect morality.

There will be no great and sufficient revival of religion till this conception be corrected. Atheism is no relief; indifference cannot afford any comfort; and belief makes the matter worse. The Churches complain of the atheism of Science; their false notion of God made it atheistic. You and I mourn at the wickedness of men in power; is there any thing in the ecclesiastical religion to scare a tyrant or a traitor? In high American office mean men live low and wicked lives, abusing the people's trust,

and then at last, when the instincts of lust, of passion, and of ambition fail them, they whine out a few penitent words to a priest, on their death beds, with their last breath making investment for their future reputation on earth, and also in the Christian Church! For this mouthful of wind do they pass for better Christians than a whole life of eighty years of philanthropy gave Franklin the reputation for. Thus selfish and deceitful men are counted for saints by the Christian clergy, while the magnificent integrity of Franklin and Washington never gave them a high place in any Christian Church! You weep at the poverty of life in the American Church—thirty thousand ministers with right of visitation and search on all mankind, and no more to show for it! A revival of religion going on over the whole land—and a revival of the slave trade at the same time, and neither hindering the other! You mourn at the poverty of life in the Churches of America, but the Church of Christendom is no better—nay, I think the Church in the Free States of America is its better part; the Christian Church abroad strikes hands with every tyrant, it treads down mankind, nor will it be ever checked, while it has such a false conception of God.

Under us is the Earth, every particle of it immanent with God; over us are the Heavens, where every star sparkles with Deity; within us are the Heavens and the Earth of human Consciousness, a grander revelation of Deity in yet higher form. These are all of them a two-fold testimony against the Ecclesiastical Conception of God. Not one of them has a whisper of testimony in favor of atheism; all are crowded with evidence of the Infinite God,—First Good, First Perfect, and First Fair, Father and Mother to you and me, to all that were, that are, that shall be, leading us to life everlasting.

### SERMON III.

#### THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEA OF GOD AND ITS RELATION TO THE SCIENTIFIC AND RELIGIOUS WANTS OF MANKIND NOW.

*Perfect love casteth out fear.—1 JOHN iv. 18.*

THE religious element is so strong that it always will act both in its instinctive and its reflective form, for though here and there an eccentric man neglect or treat it with scorn, no race of men ever does so; nay, no nation, no little tribe, no considerable company of men. There are a thousand devotees who give up all to the religious faculty where there is not a single atheist who sacrifices that to something besides. Like the two other great Primal Instincts—the hunger for bread, which keeps the

individual alive, and the hunger for posterity, which perpetuates mankind—this hunger for God is not to be put down. Here and there an individual man neglects the one or the other, the instinct of food, of kind, of religion; but the human race nor does, nor can. In Mankind instinctive nature is stronger than capricious will. Whimsy alters the cut of Ahab's beard, or the shape of Jezebel's ringlets; but the beard itself grows on Ahab's cheek and chin, will he or nill he, and Jezebel's head is herbaged all over with curls, growing while she sleeps.

Soon as Man outgrows the wild state of infancy, where he first appeared, in his primitive sense of dependence he has always felt his need of God, as in his instinctive perception he has always felt the Being of God reflected therein, and formed some Notion of God, better or worse. Go where you will, you find that men know God. The notions they form of him vary from land to land, from age to age. They are the test of the people's civilization; how rude with the savage! how comprehensive with the enlightened, thoughtful, religious man! But no nation is without them, or without a sense of obligation towards God or the practice of some form of service of him.

The notion men form of God, and the corresponding service they pay, are both proportionate to the people's civilization. The Indian Massasoit's conception of God, two hundred and fifty years ago, fitted him as well as ours fits us. Let us never forget this, nor think that we are proportionately more favored than our fathers were. Little baby Jimmy in Pennsylvania, some seventy years ago, was as much pleased with a penny trumpet, which worried his aunts and uncles, as President Buchanan now is with the Presidency of the United States and power to scare all Democrats into obedience. To us our fathers in 1858 are barbarians, and we wonder how they stood it in the world, so poorly furnished and provisioned as they were. You will be barbarians to your sons and daughters in 2858, and they will wonder how you continued to live and have a good time of it. Yet you and I think life is decent and worth having. Milk and a cradle are as good for babies as meat and railroad engines for men. Small things suit little folks. So is it in religion as all else besides. I love to read the religious stories of rude nations—the Hebrews, the Philistines, the New England Indians. The Iroquois thought there were three Spirits, the Spirit of Beans, of Squashes, and of Indian Corn, and these made an Agricultural Trinity, three beneficent persons in one rude conception of a Mohawk God. Such a notion served their souls as well as the stone tomahawk and snow-shoe their hands and feet. Let us never forget that each age is as sufficient to itself as any other age, the first as the last. The immense progress between the two is also the law of God, who has so furnished men that they shall find satisfaction for their wants, when they are babies of savage wildness and when they are grown men of civilization.

From the beginning of human history there has been a continual pro-

gress of man's conception of God. It did not begin with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham; it will not end with you and me. Yesterday I mentioned some of the facts of this progress in the Bible, and pointed out the Jehovah of the Pentateuch eating veal with Abraham and Sarah, wrestling with Jacob, trying to kill Moses and not bringing it to pass; I showed the odds between that conception of God and "Our Father who art in heaven," which filled up the consciousness of Jesus, and the God who is Perfect Love, which abode in the consciousness of another great man. This progress is observable in all other people, in the literature of every nation.

Religious progress cannot be wholly prevented; it may be hindered and kept back for a time. This is the mischief;—men form an ecclesiastical organization, and take such a conception of God as satisfies them at the time, stereotype it, and declare all men shall believe that forever. They say "This is a finality; there shall never be any other idea of God but this same, no progress hereafter." Then priests are made in the image of that Deity, and they misshape whole communities of men and women; and especially do they lay their plastic hand on the pliant matter of the child, and mismould him into deformed and unnatural shapes. What an absurdity! In 1780, in a little town of Connecticut, Blacksmith Beecher, grim all over with soot, leather-aproned, his sleeves rolled above his elbows, with great, bare, hairy arms, was forging axes "dull as a hoe," and hoes "blunt as a beetle," yet the best that men had in Connecticut in those days. What if the Connecticut lumberers and farmers had come together, and put it into their Saybrook Platform, that to the end of time all men should chop with Beecher's axes and dig with Beecher's hoes, and he who took an imperfection therefrom, his name should be taken from the Lamb's Book of Life, and he who should add an improvement thereto, the seven last plagues should be added unto him! We all see the absurdity of such a thing. In 1830, in Boston, Minister Beecher, grim with Calvinism, spliced from his shoulders to his feet, Geneva-banded, white-choked, a stalwart and valiant-minded son of the old blacksmith, was making a theology—notions of Man, of God, and of the Relation between them. His theological forge was in full blast in Hanover Street, then in Bowdoin Street, and he wrought stoutly thereat, he striking while his parish blew. But his opinions were no more a finality than his father's axes and hoes. Let Blacksmith Beecher, grim with soot, and Minister Beecher, grim with theology, hammer out the best tools they can make, axes, hoes, doctrines, sermons, and thank God if their work be of any service at that time; but let neither the blacksmith over his forge, his triphammer going, nor the minister over his pulpit, his Bible getting quoted, ever say to mankind, "Stop, gentlemen! thus far and no farther! I am the end of human history, the last milestone on the Lord's highway of progress; stop here, use my weapon, and die with it in your hand, or your soul." Depend upon it,

mankind will not heed such men; they will pass them by; whoso obstructs the path will be trodden down. Progress is the law of God.

At an early age the Christian Church accepted the Ecclesiastical Method of theology, namely—that every word between the lids of the Bible is given by God's miraculous and infallible inspiration, which contains the religious truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and to get doctrines, men must make a decoction of Bible, and only of Bible, for that is the unique herb out of which wholesome doctrines can be brewed. By that method it formed its conception of God. First, it fixed the Ethical Substance of God's character, the quality of God, with all the contradictions which you find in the Old Testament and the New. Next it fixed the Arithmetical Form of God's character, the quantitative distribution into three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, alike in their Godhead, diverse in their function. Thus the capability to produce was in the Father; the capacity of being produced was in the Son; the capacity of being proceeded from was in the Father and the Son, and the capability of proceeding was in the Holy Ghost. These are the *differentia* of the total Godhead. All that was fixed well-nigh fifteen hundred years ago.

Since that time there have been three great movements within the Christian Church. First, an attempt to centralize ecclesiastical power in the Bishop of Rome; that was the Papal movement. Next was the attempt to explain the ecclesiastical doctrines by human reason, not to alter but expound and demonstrate by intellect what was accepted by faith; that was the Scholastic movement. Then came at last the attempt to decentralize ecclesiastical power, and bring back from the Roman Bishop to the common people what he had filched thence away; that was the Protestant movement. It split the Western world in twain, following the ethnological line of cleavage; and since that there is a Roman Church with a Pope, and a Teutonic Church with a People. But the Papists and their opponents the Laists, the Scholastics and their enemies the Dogmatists, the Protestants and Catholics, all accepted the Ecclesiastical Method of theology, and so the Ecclesiastical Notion of God. So within the borders of the Christian Church, from the Council at Nice in 325 to the Council at North Woburn in 1857, there has been no revision of the Conception of God, no improvement thereof. Protestant and Catholic, Scholastic and Dogmatist, Laist and Papist, agree in the ethical substances of God and in the arithmetical form. The Athanasian creed set forth both; in the fourth century it was appointed to be read in the churches. What is called the "Apostles' Creed" has little apostolic in it save its name; yet it has been held orthodox for sixteen hundred and fifty years. All this time there has been no progress in the ecclesiastical conception of God, as set forth in the great sects of the Christian Church; the same creed which answered for the third century suffices the Church to-

day. So long as the Church holds to this ecclesiastical method of theology there can be no progress in the notion of God, for only Biblical plants may be put into the ecclesiastical caldron, and from them all only that conception can be distilled, though it may be flavored a little, diversely here and there, to suit the taste of special persons.

But shall Mankind stop? We cannot if we would. We can stereotype a creed and hire men to read it, or scare, or coax them; but a new Truth from God shines straight down through creed and congregation, as that sunlight through the sky. In the last four hundred years what a mighty development has there been of human knowledge! In three hundred and sixty years the geographic world has doubled; and what a development in astronomy, chemistry, botany, zoology; in mathematics, metaphysics, ethics, history! How comprehensive is science now! But there has been no development in the Church's conception of God. The ecclesiastical God knows nothing of modern science—chemistry, geology, astronomy; even the geographic extent of the earth is foreign thereto; neither Jehovah nor the ecclesiastical Trinity ever heard of Australia, of the Friendly Islands, nor even of the Continent of America. The ecclesiastical conception of God was formed before the discovery of America, before modern science was possible. The two are not to be reconciled. Which shall yield, the Fact of Science, or the Fiction of Theology?

Outside of the orthodox Christian Church there has been a great development of the conception of God, a revision of it more or less complete, certainly a great improvement. Thus the Unitarians rejected the Trinitarian arithmetic, and said, "God is one nature in one person." The Universalists rejected the devilish element and said, "God is love all over, and is not hate anywhere." Once it seemed as if these two sects would make a revolution in the Church's notion of God: but alas! the Unitarians and Universalists both accept the ecclesiastical method of theology, and when they appeal to the miraculous and infallible Bible in support of their more reasonable and religious notion of God, they are always beaten in that court where Genesis is of as much value as the four Gospels, and murderous Joshua as great a theological authority as beneficent Jesus. So when they rely on the Bible, these sects are defeated, and draw back toward the old Church with its belief of a ferocious Deity; this explains the condition and character of these two valuable sects. Accordingly, little good has come from their movement, once so hopeful. They would change Measures and Doctrines, but they would not alter the Principle which controls the measure, nor the Method whereby the doctrines are made; and so these sects leaven only a little of the whole lump; they do not create that great fermentation which is necessary to make the whole Church take a new form. How much depends on the first Principle, and the right Method!

Now, by the Philosophic Method, a man takes the Facts of instinctive and

reflective Consciousness within him, and the Facts of Observation without, and thence forms his Idea of God. He will be helped by the labors of such as have gone before him, and will refuse to be hindered by the errors of the greatest men. He will take the good things about God in this blessed Bible, because they are good, but not a single ill thing will he take because it is in the Bible. "God is love," says a writer in the New Testament, and our thoughtful man will accept that; but he will not feel obliged to accept that other statement, in the Old Testament, that "God is a consuming fire;" or yet a kindred one in the New Testament, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," "prepared for the devil and his angels." He will understand and believe that "He that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God;" but he will not assent to this, which the Christian Church teaches, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Because he accepts the good and true of the Bible, he will not fall down and accept the false and ill; for the ultimate standard of appeal will not be to a Book writ with pens, as a minister interprets it, but to the Facts of the Universe, as the human mind interprets them.

In philosophic men the reflective element prevails; but I do not think they often have much intuitive power to perceive religious truths directly, by the primal human instinct; nor do I think that they in the wisest way observe the innermost activities of the human soul. Poets like Shakespeare observe the play of human passion and ambition better than metaphysicians like Berkeley and Hume, better than moralists like Butler and Paley. Commonly, I think, men and women of simple religious feeling furnish the facts which men of great thoughtful genius work up into philosophic theology. It is but rarely that any man has a genius for instinctive intuition, and also for philosophic generalization therefrom. Such a man, when he comes, fills the whole sky, from the nadir of special primitive religious emotion up to the zenith of universal philosophic thought. You and I need not wait for such men, but thankfully take the Truth, part by part, here a little and there a little, and accept the service of whoso can help, but taking no man for master—neither Calvin, nor Luther, nor Paul, nor John, nor Moses, nor Jesus—open our soul to the Infinite God, who is sure to come in without bell, book, or candle.

When a man pursues this natural, philosophic method of theology, takes his facts from consciousness in his own world, and observation in the world of matter, then he arrives at the Philosophical Idea of the God of Infinite Perfection. That God has all the qualities of complete and perfect being; He has Infinite Power to do, Infinite Mind to know, Infinite Conscience to will the right, Infinite Affection to love, Infinite Holiness to be faithful to his affections, conscience, mind, power. He has Being without limitation, Absolute Being; he is present in all space, at all times;

everywhere always, as much as sometimes anywhere. He fills all spirit, not less than all matter, yet is not limited by either, transcending both, being alike the materiality of matter, and the spirituality of spirit—that is, the substantiality which is the ground of each, and which surpasses and comprehends all. He is Perfect Cause and Perfect Providence, creating all things from a perfect motive, of a perfect material, for a perfect purpose, and as a perfect means, and to a perfect end. So, of all conceivable worlds he makes the best possible, of all conceivable degrees of welfare he provides the best in kind and the greatest in bulk, not only for all as a whole, but for each as an individual, for Jesus of Nazareth who is faithful, for Judas Iscariot who turns traitor. There is no Absolute Evil in the world, either for the whole as all, nor for any one as part.

That is the Philosophic Idea of God and of his relation to the Universe. To-day I state it short, for I have dwelt on it often before, and perhaps at some other time I shall take up the idea part by part, and speak of God as Infinite Power, then as Infinite Wisdom, then as Infinite Justice, as Infinite Love, Infinite Integrity, and so on.

I think this Idea of God as Infinite Perfection, Perfect Power, Wisdom, Justice, Love, Holiness, is the grandest thought which has ever come into mortal mind. It is the highest result of human civilization. Let no man claim it as his original thought; it is the result of all mankind's religious experience. It lay latent in human nature once, a mere instinctive religious feeling. At length it becomes a bright particular thought in some great mind; and one day will be the universal thought in all minds, and will displace all other notions of God—Hindoo, Egyptian, Hebrew, Classic, Christian, Mohammedan, just as the true theory of astronomy, which actually explains the stars, displaced the Ptolemaic and all the other theories which were only approximate; just as the iron axe displaced the tomahawk of stone.

The Evidence of this God is in man's Consciousness and in the World of Matter likewise outside of him. When the idea is presented to a thoughtful man, he at once says, "Yes, God is Infinite Perfection, Power, Wisdom, Justice, Holiness, Love," for human nature is too strong for his theologic prejudice. To prove there is such a being as Jehovah, who met Moses in a tavern between Midian and Egypt some thirty-three hundred years ago, and vainly tried to kill him, you must know Hebrew, and understand the antiquities of the Jews, know who wrote the Book of Exodus, where he got his facts, what he meant by his words, what authority he rested on; and when you have made that investigation, the story will turn out to be wind, and none the better because Hebrew wind thirty-three hundred years old; and after all that, you do not come to a fact of the Universe, but only the fiction of a story-teller. But to prove the Infinite Perfection of God, you have the facts in your own nature; you are to sit down beside that primeval well and draw for yourself,

and drinking thence, you shall thirst no longer for heathen Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Gentile Damascus, nor for the Hebrew Jordan itself, for you shall find there is a well of living water within you, springing up to everlasting life; and as you drink, the scales of theologic leprosy fall off from your eyes, and you stand there a clean man, full of the primitive, aboriginal vigor of Humanity. As you look down into that depth of consciousness do you behold the eternal and immutable Idea of the Infinitely Perfect God forever mirrored there. This depends on no subjective peculiarities of the individual, but on the objective forces of the Universe. So, by its name to distinguish it from all other notions of God, I will call this the Philosophical or Natural Idea of God; it seems to me a fact given in Humanity itself, a self-evident truth of spiritual consciousness, something we discover in the Universe, not something we invent and project thereon. So, while I name the others Conceptions of God, I call this the Idea of God—the Philosophical Idea, because derived by that Method—the Natural, because it corresponds to Nature. To this men will also add conceptions of their own invention, which partake of the subjective peculiarity of John or Jane.

I. This Idea of God is adequate to the Purposes of Science. First of all things the philosopher wants an Adequate Cause for the Facts of the Universe, both the World of Matter out of him, and the World of Spirit in him. He is to explain facts by showing their mode of operation, and tracing them back to the cause—to the proximate cause first, to the ultimate cause at last. Now, as I showed before, the Ecclesiastical Conception of God furnishes no adequate cause for the Facts of the Universe. To the theologian it is cause sufficient for Noah's flood, for the ark, for the downfall of Jericho when the rams'-horns blew, for the standing still of the sun and moon while a Hebrew army slew their victims;—it explains such things as are not authenticated facts of history, but only anonymous fictions of mythology. It is no adequate cause for the earth under our feet, for the heavens over our head, and, least of all, for this earth and heaven of human consciousness within us. The ecclesiastical God is sufficient cause for the Westminster Catechism, for baptism, by sprinkling or plunging, for belief in eternal damnation, for admission to Dr. Banbury's Church—but it does not explain a mother's love for her wicked, profligate girl; nor David's wailing over his worthless, handsome boy: "O Absalom, my son! my son Absalom! would God that I had died for thee!"—there is no fact in the ecclesiastical God's consciousness which corresponds to that. It is not cause for such a man as Socrates, or Franklin, nor such women as Miss Dix and Miss Nightingale, and others not less noble, only less known. It explains Pharaoh's dream about fat and lean kine; the story of Elisha's cursing the children who cried after him, "Go up, thou bald head, go,"

and of the two she-bears out of the woods who tore two and forty of those children to atoms in Divine and bearish wrath—but it does not explain the life of such a man as Jesus of Nazareth, nor his lament, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!” It does not account for that grandest of human triumphs, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” To explain such characters the ecclesiastical conception of God is no more adequate cause than the penny-trumpet in a little boy’s mouth is sufficient to explain the world of music which Beethoven dreamed into thought and then poured forth, gladdening the earth with such sweet melody. Read the Book of Genesis, then read Newton’s Principia, Humboldt’s Kosmos, nay, any college manual of chemistry, and ask if the theologic God is cause adequate to the chemic composition of a single flower! Nay, read the stories in Genesis, or the sermons in Jonathan Edwards, and then in some starry night look up to the sky, and ask if that form of Deity could have conceived the heavens? You see at once how insufficient it is.

But the God of Infinite Perfection is Adequate Cause for all the facts in the Universe. In the world of matter you find Power resident on the spot; Mind resident on the spot, a Plan everywhere, things working together in order. The world of matter is a “team of little atomies,” thing yoked to thing, and skilfully are they drove afield by that Almighty One whose thoughtful road is everywhere. All is orderly—never a break in the line of continuity. In the fossil animals which perished a million of years ago you find proximate formations which point to man; nay, yet further back in the structure of the earth, the fashion of the solar system itself, do we find finger-posts which indicate the road to humanity—distinctly pointing unto man. There is Law always, a constant mode of operation, never a miracle; no chemist, geologist, astronomer, can show proof of the “intervention of God,” but the Power, Mind, Law, constant mode of operation, these show the presence of God always, everywhere, ordering all things “by number and measure and weight.” The chemist analyzes matter into some sixty primitive substances, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, and the rest; but of all that “team of atomies” not a single brute creature ever thinks a thought; it is in God that the Mind resides, in him is the Power and the Plan. Mr. Whewell, a theological man indeed, but yet also, I think, certainly one of the ablest and most dispassionate men of science in these days, writes a book against the Plurality of Worlds, and declares there is no conscious life analogous to man’s in any planet, in sun, or moon, or star: it is a dead world up there; the sun is a dead sun, the moon is dead as brass, and there is no life in any star. Why so? It is not consistent with the Ecclesiastical Notion of God; the Book of Miraculous Revelation never gives us a hint of a living thing in sun or moon or star; the Plan of Atonement applies only to the earth, it cannot reach an inch beyond the atmosphere, which extends about fifty-two miles from the surface! Mr. Whewell is right—a plurality of worlds is wholly in-

consistent with the ecclesiastical God; there is no record that such a thought ever crossed the mind of Moses, Jesus, Paul or John, that it ever occurred to Hebrew Jehovah or Christian Trinity. But it is not inconsistent with the Infinite God, and the philosopher who believes in him will not correct the facts of Nature by the fictions of Genesis. To him, how different the World of Matter appears, one grand act of creative power, which is everywhere active at all times.

Then when this Idea is accepted no philosopher will be bid to look for a miracle, and called an "infidel" because he finds only Law—law in the botanic growth of plants, law in the chemic composition of minerals, law in the mechanic structure of the earth, the sun, the solar system, the Universe itself. Then there will be no atheistic Lagranges and La Places to deny all God, because they do not find the phantom which theologians bid them seek, and because their telescope bores through the spot where the New Jerusalem was said to be, and finds but blank celestial space! From the scheme of matter and of mind no brilliant Schelling, no cautious, erudite Von Buch, no comprehensive, magnificent, generous, and thousand-minded Von Humboldt shall ever omit the Cause and Providence of matter and of mind!

Then, too, how different will the great complex world of Human History appear! Men will study it without hindrance, asking only for facts, for the law of the facts, and the human meaning of the law. They will find no 'miracle in man's religious history, but a continual development of a faculty common to all mankind, a gradual progress in religious feeling, religious thought, religious act; no savage nation without consciousness of God, a sense of dependence, obligation, gratitude—aye, and trust in him, and something of love for him "even in savage bosoms"—all this proportionate to the people's civilization. The philosopher will find God in all human history, in the gradual elevation of mankind from the low state of the wild man, to higher and higher types of excellence.

Jehovah is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; he inspires only Jews, them not much. He hates Esau, and butchers the Canaanites. To the Gentiles he is not a loving God, but a hating Devil. The ecclesiastical God is a Redeemer only to the redeemed—a handful of men, rather mean men too, I fear, most of them. What is he to babies dying unbaptized? What to the wicked whom death cuts down in their unrepented naughtiness? He is not God, but a "consuming fire;" he is "the Devil and his angels" to such; not the God of love, but a "great and dreadful God," who laughs when their fear cometh, and crushes Sodom and Gomorrah under foot, as a Bacchanalian treads the wine-press full of purple-blooded grapes!

With the philosophical Idea, there is a God for all nations, for all men, inspiring liberal Greece and prudent Rome not less than pious Judea—a

God for babies sprinkled, and for babies all unsmeched by priestly hands ; a God for Jacob and Esau, Jew and Gentile ; a God to whom mankind is dear, Father and Mother to the human race ! Then you can explain human history : the diverse talents of Egyptian, Hindoo, Persian, Hebrew, Greek, Teuton, Celt, American, these are various gifts, which imply no partial love on the part of him who makes yon oak a summer green, yon pine a winter green. You find the Infinite God in human history, as in the world of matter ; for as the plan of material combination, mineral, vegetable, animal, did not reside in any one of the sixty primitive substances, nor in the world of minerals, plants, animals, but in God, who is the thoughtful substance to these unthinking forms—so the plan of human history is not in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob ; it is not in the whole world of men, but in the Infinite God, who is the Providence that shapes our ends to some grand purpose which we know not of. Thus the true idea of God is adequate to the Purposes of Science both of matter and man.

II. This Idea of God is also adequate to the Purposes of Religion. For that I want not merely a cause sufficient to my intellect, but much more. I want a God I can trust and have absolute confidence in, so that I am sure of him. Now the savage may confide in a God of blood, a partial God, who loves Jacob and hates Esau ; an inconstant and irregular God, who works by fits and starts, who is absent now for a long time, and then comes in with miraculous pomp, signs, and wonders. A malignant man may be content for a moment with his vengeful Deity, who hates the wicked and will torment them forever ; but soon as a man is considerably enlightened in his mind, conscience, heart and soul, soon as he comprehends the Power that is everywhere always, active and acting for good, then that savage deity is not enough for him. He wants not only infinite Ability,—power of Force to do, power of Mind to plan, and Will to execute, but also power of Conscience to will right, and the Infinite power of Affection to love all men and all things, using this energy of will, mind, force, for the welfare of each man—nay, of every mote that peoples this little leaf. That quality is not in the ecclesiastical God ; here it is in the true God of earth and heaven and human consciousness. He is perfect creating Cause, making all things of the best possible material, from the best possible motives, for the best possible purpose, and as the best possible means to achieve that purpose. He is perfect conserving Providence, who is as perfectly, completely and essentially present in this little rosebud which I hold in my hand, as he was when, as the Biblical poet has it, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” at the creation of the earth, just springing into new-born stellar life. He administers all things by the perfect method, with the best of means, and will secure the best of ends for you and me, for each man, saint and sinner, for the poor widow who supplicates and the unjust judge who fears not God, neither regards man.

By the ecclesiastical notion there is Absolute Evil in God, a dark deep background, out of which comes evil in the nature of things; and hence comes the total depravity of man, hence the wrath of God, enlivening forever the fire of hell, which no deluge of human tears and blood can ever quench. So the Evil in the world is eternal, not reconciled, not atoned for; it cannot be removed, neither in this life nor that to come, because it is an essential part of God. Nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand are sinners, and their sin is eternal, not to be removed; so their agony has no end. Trace it back logically to its ultimate cause, and it is all God's fault. So every sin not repented of that you and I commit, is not only perpetual wretchedness for us, but likewise an eternal blot on the character of the ecclesiastical God. Under the parlor windows of his little Heaven, where the elect loll on their couches and look out, indolently touching their harps of gold, there lies the immeasurable Sink of Hell, where the Devils, those unclean beasts of the infernal world, wallow continual, rending the souls of men, while the reek of their agony ascends up forever and ever!

But by the true and philosophic or natural Idea of God, all the Evil of the world is something incident to man's development, and no more permanent than the stumbling of a child who learns to walk, or his scrawling letters when he first essays to write. It will be outgrown, and not a particle of it or its consequences shall cleave permanent to mankind. This is true of the individual wrongs which you and I commit; and likewise of such vast wickedness as war, political oppression, and the hypocrisy of priesthoods. These are blots in mankind's writing-book, which we make in learning to copy out God's Eternal Rule of Right in fair round letters, so clear that he may read who runs. The very pain the error gives is remedial, not revengeful; it is medicine to cure and save and bless, not poison to kill and torture with eternal smart. Here then is a God you can trust—Power, Wisdom, Will, Justice also, and likewise Love. What quality is there a man can ask for that is not in the Infinite, Perfect God?

Then there will be a Form of Religion adapted to represent such an idea of God. It will conform to Man's Nature, his body and soul, doing justice to every part, for as God made man with such faculties as would best serve his own great end, so it is clear that it is man's duty to use these faculties in their natural way, for their normal purpose. God did not make man with something redundant to be cut off, or lacking something to be sought elsewhere and tied on; he gave us such faculties as are fit for our work.

1. See the effect this idea has on Piety. A natural religious instinct inclines us to love God. If we have an Idea of him which suits that faculty, then the soul loves God as the eye loves light, the ear sound, as the mind loves truth, use and beauty, the conscience justice, and the affections men

and women. The hungry religious faculty seeks for itself bread, finds it, and is filled with strength and delight. If it find it not, then we are tortured by Fear, that ugly raven which preys on the dissatisfied heart of man. Now the Infinite God is the object of entire and complete satisfaction to the Soul. You want perfect power for your reverence, perfect wisdom for your intellect, perfect justice for your conscience, perfect love for your affections, perfect integrity for your soul: and here they all are in the infinitely perfect God. So piety will be complete in all its parts, and perfect too in each. I cannot love a wicked man as a good man, nor a foolish and unjust man as one wise and just; no more can I love a foolish God, nor an unjust God, nor a hating God. In proportion as I am wise, just, humane, shall I hate such a God, and repudiate the shameful thought. But the perfect God—I cannot help loving him just in proportion to my excellence. He made me so. I put it to the consciousness of every one of you, is it not so? When God is thus presented as infinitely perfect, can you refrain from loving him with your intellect, your conscience, heart and soul? No more than the healthy eye can fail to enjoy the light; no more than the hungry, healthy appetite can help rejoicing in its natural food, the maiden in her lover, or the bridegroom in his bride!

2. Not less does this Idea of God affect Morality, the other part of religion. I find certain ideal rules of conduct writ on my body and in my spirit. By inward and outward experience gradually I learn these rules—the laws of God, enacted by him into my flesh and soul. I shall try to keep these laws; I know they are his commandment. I shall turn every faculty to its special work. My general piety, the love of God, shall come out in my normal daily work, in temperance and chastity, the piety of the body; in knowledge of the true, the useful, the beautiful, the piety of the intellect; in justice for all men, the piety of the conscience; in affection for all in their various relations to me, in love for my friend, kindred, wife and child, which is the piety of the heart; yes, it will appear in continual trust, in absolute reliance on the Infinite God, which is the great total generic piety of the soul.

Then Religion will not be away off, one side of my life, separate from my daily duty as brother, sister, son, father, mother; not apart from my work as blacksmith, governor, shoemaker, minister, nurse, seamstress, baby-tender, cook, editor, judge, or whatever I may be; but the soul of piety will make religion in all these things. It will not be an exception in my life, condensed into a single moment of morning or of evening prayer; it will be the instance of my life, spread as daylight over all my work.

One day this Idea of God will shine in human consciousness, and all the rude conceptions which now prevail will vanish as Moloch, Baal, Zeus,

Jupiter, Odin, and Thor have faded out from the religion of all live mankind. To-day nobody prays to, nor swears by these names, whereunto millions of men once fell prostrate and poured out such sacrificial blood. One day the God of Infinite Perfection shall be felt and known by all mankind ! Then no bigot, ignorant as a beast, shall essay to rebuke thoughtful men where he knows nothing and they know much. No longer shall priests—ill-born to little talent, ill-bred to superstition, ignorance and bad manners—thrust their anointed stupidity in between man and God ; no longer shall fanaticism pinch the forehead of the people ; no longer shall it mutilate the fair body of man, nor practise yet more odious emasculation on the soul. Religion shall not mildew and rot the fruit of manhood ; nor blast the bloom of youth ; nor nip the baby bud : but the strongest force in our nature shall warm and electrify the whole plant of humanity, helping the baby bud swell into youthful bloom, and ripen into manly fruit, golden and glorious amid the sheltering leaves of human life. To youth, religion shall give a rosier flush of healthy joy ; to maid and man shall it bring strength, more stalwart and a lovelier beauty, cheering them through their single or their married toilsome life ; and it shall set its kingliest diadem, a crown of heavenly stars, on the experienced brow of age.

To-day “all Christendom is Christian.” Why ? It has the ecclesiastical method, the ecclesiastical conception of God, a mode of salvation by another man’s religion, not our own. Let me do no injustice. It has the best form of religion the world has devised yet on any large scale, which has done great service ; but in all Christendom ecclesiastical Christianity hinders no war, it breaks no tyrant’s rod, it never liberates a slave, emancipates no woman, shuts up no drunkenness, removes no cause of ignorance, poverty, or crime, cherishes the gallows ; it is no bar to the politician’s ambition, all reckless of the natural rights of man ; it never checks a pope or priest in his hypocrisy. Every monster is sure to have this ecclesiastical form of religion on his side, and when Napoleon or President Buchanan wishes to do a special wicked deed, he bends his public knees and supplicates his ecclesiastic God, the name in which all evil begins.

But the true Idea of God, the Religion which is to come of it, which is love of that God and keeping all his commandments, will work such a revolution in man’s affairs as Luther, nor Moses, nor yet mightiest Jesus ever wrought. God everywhere, Infinite Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Integrity, Religion in all life, over the anvil, in the pulpit, beside the cradle, on the throne—what a new world shall that make, when the great river of God runs in the channel he made for it, singing melodies as it runs, and sending the spray up from its bosom to fertilize whole continents, which shall break out into flowers, that ripen into fruit, the very leaves for the healing of the nations !

## SERMON IV.

### OF THE SOUL'S NORMAL DELIGHT IN THE INFINITE GOD.

"I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."—Pa. xvii. 15.

If a man be sure of the Infinite Perfection of God, the natural object of desire for all his nobler faculties, what tranquillity and delight is there for him; not spasmodic and violent, but equable and continuous! Then the strongest of all the human powers finds what most of all it needs; and the highest, the greatest of all human delights peoples the consciousness with this Holy Family of Love. I do not wonder that all men are not rich—it is not possible; nor famous—that, too, is beyond the reach of all save one in a million, even if each were so foolish as to wish he had a great name always rattling behind him, filling his ears with dust and silly noise. It is not to be supposed that all men will pre-eminently be wise, or witty; nay, not even learned. It does not astonish me that no more try for such things, though feeling yet their charm. But I am amazed that any one should be content to trudge along through life without a good culture of the religious faculty. I should of all things hate to be poor in Piety and Morality. Above all things I would know God and live in tranquil gladness with him.

When a little boy, I used to hear ministers preach that the natural man did not love God; but I was sure the natural Boy did. They said that Religion was something man naturally turned off from and avoided, and only the Holy Ghost could catch and bring him painful back. I confess I was filled with wonder, for to my young experience it seemed as natural for a man, at least a boy, to worship God, to love God, to trust in him, and feel a delight in him, as it was for my father's bees to get wax and honey from the yellow blossoms of the willow or the elm—the first flowers of the late Northern Spring—or to revel in the lilacs which hung over the bee-house, or rejoice in the white clover of New England, that, beautifying the fields all around, wooed those little bridegrooms to its fragrant and sweet breast. No theological education and gray-bearded experience with mankind makes me now wonder less when I hear the old calumny repeated for the thousandth time.

Look all the world over, and see how man delights in God. These roses do not unveil and disclose their fair bosoms to the sun more naturally than spontaneous man opens his soul to God and welcomes the great Star, shedding infinite daylight therein. Men with fire sacrificing their sons

unto Moloch, or Jehovah, men crushed before the car of Juggernaut, men in convents, women emaciated to nuns, crowds of men in Philadelphia, New York, Berlin, and London, thrilled with bristling horror at the terrible phantom which some bony Calvinist calls out of his dark imagination to scare them withal, these testify of the necessity man feels to turn his face towards God; and if he find not the true, then will he fasten on some cheating substitute. If there be no God that he can love, then he crouches down beneath the conception of some God of Damnation, and is horrified with fear. The Soul, like the mouth, goes ever, and must be fed, if not on what it would, then at least on the best it finds.

Mankind takes great delight in its religious consciousness. With what joy did Egypt build up its pyramids, and from a mountain Brahmanic Indians hew their rock-cut temples out! The wondrous architecture of the Ionian Greeks in many a marble town, the fantastic mosques of the Mohammedans, the arabesques of Moslem piety, the amazing churches of the mediæval Christians—all these were built with solemn joy! Not without delight did laborious men express the nation's gloomy religious consciousness in these things. Phoenicians worshipping Melkartha, Siamese prostrate before their great idol of a silver Buddha, Nootka Sound Indians all a rainy day sitting on the eaves of their god-house and drumming with the naked feet, Catholics on Easter Sunday, kneeling by thousands before St. Peter's that the Pope may say "Peace be with you!" Protestants crowding to a camp-meeting or a revival—all these are witnesses to this great religious instinct, stronger than all outward force, which moves them toward the Divine.

I think my own life has not been lacking in happiness of a high character. I have swam in clear sweet waters all my days; and if sometimes they were a little cold, and the stream ran adverse and something rough, it was never too strong to be breasted and swam through. From the days of earliest boyhood, when I went "stumbling through the grass," "as merry as a May bee," up to the gray-bearded manhood of this time, there is none but has left me honey in the hive of memory, that I now feed on for present delight. When I recall the years of boyhood, youth, early manhood, I am filled with a sense of sweetness, and wonder that such little things can make a mortal so exceeding rich! But I must confess that the chiefest of all my delights is still the religious. This is the lowest down, the inwardest of all—it is likewise highest up. What delight have I in my consciousness of God, the certainty of his protection, of his Infinite Love! There is an Infinite Father—nay, Infinite Mother is the dearer and more precious name—who takes a special care of me, and has made this world, with its vast forces, to serve and bless me, an Elias chariot on which I shall ride to heaven—nay, am riding that way all the time! God loves me as my natural mother never did, nor could, nor can even now with the added beatitudes of well-nigh two score years in heaven. I stand

on the top of the world—all the stars shine for me. But he loves just as well the little boy, black as my coat, born this hour in some wigwam of South Africa, and will take just as special care thereof, and has made the Universe a chariot of fire to translate that little black Elias to heaven withal; he also stands on the top of the world and has a life-estate in the sun and moon and every star. Nay, God takes just as good care of the mouse which gnaws the grocer's cheese to-day, nor never for a moment neglects the little aphis now sucking this leaf; nor the parasitic animalecule which feeds on the aphia, the atomy of an atomy. They also stand on the top of the world, this great Celestial Sphere whereof God is both centre and circumference. Consciousness of that God, the Cause and Providence of all the world, it fills me with such delight as all the world besides can never give! I wonder any one who ever opened half an eye inwardly, could dream that Religion is unnatural to man, that Piety is not welcome to our innermost as are these roses welcome to the Spring. For what I say of me is also true of you, if not of each, why, certainly, of most—'tis true of Man, if not of men.

In great Italian towns, all winter long, you shall see men and women, too old, perhaps, for work, yet not quite poor enough for professional beggary, wrinkled as Egyptian mummies; they crawl out of their hovels and creep through the cold darkness of the lanes they live in, and, screened from the wind under the wall of some great church, palace, or monastery, they nestle all day in the yellow sunshine of the sky, so happy in that light which gives them also necessary warmth do those venerable babies seem, blest by that great star which shines forever on them, though six and ninety million miles away! In New England or Pennsylvania, when the spring thaws out the farm-house, and, speck by speck, the dry earth appears green with healthy grass, and the fresh smell of the ground, such as you find it at no other time, comes up a wholesome breath, some pale, little tall girl, toddling about the narrow kitchen all winter long, looking thin and peaked, comes out to revel in the sunshine and the new grass. The breath of the ground is the inspiration of health to her; the eye, dim and sunken just now, ere long glows like the morning star in that young heaven, and the pale cheek has the bloom of the ruddy clover in it too. By-and-bye, the mother, careful and troubled about many things, tells the neighbors at meeting on Sunday, "O, Jinnie's quite another girl now the spring's come from what she was in February and March. The winter went hard with her, poor thing; I and her father begun to think she'd melt away before the snow did! I think she'll get along nicely now!" What the sun is to the sickly girl whom winter pent up in the narrow house, and to the lazzaroni at Naples, whose poverty allows him no nearer fire and light, that is the Religious Consciousness to you and me; yes, to all men in all lands, in every age save the rudest of all.

I do not see how any one can live without it; I think none ever does.

As the body on the material world, so the soul must live on God, that universal motherly bosom to warm and feed mankind. All over the world do you find the sweet and holy flower of Piety springing out of the ground of humanity, common as grass on the earth, or stars above it. Early literature is full of religion. Man's first psalm is of God; so little babies first of all things say Mamma, Papa. Theology is the oldest of all science —this queen mother of many knowledges. Amid all the babble of shrewd, noisy tongues, this language of heaven, spoken in a still small voice, is yet understood of all mankind. Civilized people have their Bibles, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Hebrew, Christian, Mohammedan, writ with pens, but yet thought inspired of God. The savage also has his Bible, far older, yet not writ with pens. Mr. Cartier, who went among the North American Indians in the sixteenth century, says: "A day seldom passes with an elderly Indian, or others who are esteemed wise and good, in which a blessing is not asked or thanks returned to the Giver of all life, sometimes audibly, but most generally in the devotional language of the heart." Another missionary amongst them says, when the Indian party broke up their winter encampment, they went to the spring which had furnished them water, and thanked the Great Spirit who had preserved them in health and safety, and supplied their wants. "You then witness the silent but deeply impressive communion which the unsophisticated native of the forest holds with his Creator."

"Every human heart is human,  
And even in savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,  
For the good they comprehend not;  
And the feeble hands and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,  
And are lifted up and strengthened."

Do not think that God knows only such as "know Christ," or Moses. He is no respecter of persons. The footsteps of religion, you see them in the dew of the world's early morning; they are deeply set in the primeval rock of human history. How multitudinous are the conceptions of God, all meant to satisfy the soul which longs for Him! The appetite for food, the instinct for dress, how many experiments they make! Humanity could not dispense with one of them.

"The lively Grecian in a land of hills,  
Rivers and fertile plains and sounding shores,"  
"Could find commodious place for every God."

"In despite  
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets  
By wandering rhapsodists, and in contempt.  
Of doubt and blind denial, hourly urged  
Amid the wrangling schools, a spirit hung,

Beautiful vision, o'er thy towns and farms,  
 Statues and temples and memorial tombs ;  
 And emanations were perceived ; and acts  
 Of immortality, in Nature's course,  
 Exemplified by mysteries that were felt  
 As bonds on grave Philosopher imposed  
 And armed warrior ; and in every grove  
 A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,  
 When Piety more awful had relaxed."  
 "And doubtless sometimes a thought arose  
 Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired :  
 That hath been, is, and where it was and is,  
 Then shall endure—existence unexposed  
 To the blind walk of mortal accident ;  
 From diminution safe, and weakening age,  
 While man grows old and dwindles and decays ;  
 And countless generations of Mankind  
 Depart, and leave no vestige where they trod."

Trust me, none is wholly without God in the world. Even in the wickedest of men there must be yet some line of light lying along their horizon, where the great Heavenly Sun, unseen, unknown, refracts his rays in the dense air, and, stooping down, touches with fire the edge of their little kingdom of earth ; at least some little Northern Light of superstition, which is also a dawn, flickers in their cold, cloudy sky : else in their Arctic winter, even piratical murderers or manstealing dogs would go mad at feeling such Egyptian darkness, and would die outright.

But yet there are, certainly, great differences among men in respect to their internal Consciousness of Religion. In our great towns there are millionaires; also are there paupers, beggars there. What an odds between these devotees of money ! So are there likewise paupers of religious consciousness, clad with but a few rags of pious experience, rudely stitched with an oath or a momentary aspiration, pasted together here and there with religious fear—a covering all too scant—and through the loops and rents of this spiritual raiment the bitter winds of life blow in upon the smarting soul. There are also great Capitalists of Religion, Millionaires of Piety and Morality, whose long life industriously spent in holy feeling, holy thinking, holy work, has given them a great real and personal Estate of Religion, whence they have now a daily income of spiritual delight. This triumph of the soul you often find in men of no outward distinction, sometimes furnished with but little learning—the religious their only spiritual wealth. But the highest religious delight is not found in these monsters of piety, only in well-proportioned characters, when all the faculties are fully grown and trained up well. For the religious is a mixture likewise of all other joys, and, like manna, "hath the taste of all in it."

It is not fair to expect much religious experience in the Child. Reverence for the All-in-All, gratitude for his genial providence, the disposition to trust this Divine Mother, and to keep the laws of conscience, that is all

we should commonly look for at an early age. The fair fruits of religion come only at a later day, not in April or May, but only in September and October. Nay, there are winter-fruits of religion, which are not fully ripe till the trees bloom again, and the grandfather of fourscore years, sees the little plants flowering under his shadow ; not till then, perhaps, are the great rich winter pears of religion fully perfect in their luscious ripeness.

Yet the religious disposition is a blessed thing, even in childhood. How it inclines the little boy or girl to veneration and gratitude—virtues, which in the child are what good breeding is in the full-grown gentleman, giving a certain air of noble birth and well-bred superiority. There is a Jacob's ladder for our young pilgrim, whereon he goes up from his earthly mother, who manages the little room he sleeps in, to the dear Heavenly Mother, who never slumbers nor sleeps, who is never careful and troubled about any thing, but yet cares continually for the great housekeeping of all the world, giving likewise to her beloved even in their sleep. In the child it is only the faint twilight, the beginnings of religion which you take notice of, like the voice of the bluebird, and the Phoebe, coming early in March, but only as a prelude to that whole summer of joyous song, which, when the air is delicate, will ere long gladden and beautify the procreant nest.

Painful is it to see a child whose religious culture has been neglected ; the heavenly germ attempting growth, but checked by weeds, which no motherly hand plucks up or turns away. More painful to see it forced to unnatural hot-bed growth, to be succeeded by helpless imbecility at last. Worse still to find the young soul cursed with false doctrines, which film over the eye till it cannot see the Sun of Righteousness rising with such healing in his beams, and make life a Great Dark Day, hideous with fear and devils, and amazed with the roar of greedy hell ! Such ill-entreated souls often grow idiotic in their religious sense, or else, therein stark mad and penned up in churches and other asylums, mope and gibber in their hideous bereavement, thinking " man is totally depraved," and God a great ugly devil, an almighty cat, who worries his living prey, tormenting them before their time, and will forever tear them to pieces in the never-ending agony of hell ! It is terrible to hear the sermons, hymns, and prayers, which these unfortunates wail out in their religious folly or delirium. To cause one of these little ones to offend in that way, it were better that a millstone were hanged about the father or the mother's neck, and they were drowned in the depths of the sea. I say it is but the beginning of religion that we find in the tender age ; twilight or sunrise, seldom more. The time of piety is not yet. Blame not the little tree ; in due season it will litter the ground with purple figs.

In later years you see the flowers of religion, you taste the fruit of its gladdening consciousness of God. In early manhood there are temptations

of instinctive passion, which clamors for its object, and cares but little with what its hungry maw is fed. In later manhood, there are temptations of ambition, a subtler and more deceitful peril. I know nothing but religion that is commonly able to defend us from either; this is strong enough for each, for both together.

Young Esau is hungry; the pottage is savory. Desire from within leagues with Occasion from without. "No other eye is on me," quoth he. His pulses throb; the lightning, the earthquake, the fire of passion, pass with swift tumultuous roar along his consciousness. But the nice ear of Conscience listens to the still small voice of Duty, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." He turns him off from her snare, charm she never so wisely, and if he fail of the pottage, he is not poisoned with the wild-gourds stirred therein; with chaste hand he keeps his birthright of integrity. "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his ways?" asks young Esau, but from his religious soul the answer straightway comes: "By taking heed to the law of Duty, clearly writ and plain to read." He drinks clean water out of his own sweet spring, and thirsts no more for the tepid tanks of vice, dirty and defiling. His natural passion is directed by its natural master, and what is so often the foe of youth becomes his ally and invigorating friend.

In a later day more dangerous lusts invade the maturer man. Jonas is alone in his place of business now. It is late; all the clerks have gone home, the shutters are closed, the fire smoulders low in the grate. The gas is thriftily turned down; by the dim light I cannot see whether the counting-room opens into factory, grocery, haberdashery, warehouse, or bank. I but distinctly see the desk—symbolic furniture for all the five, with many more—and an anxious man heavy with long-continued doubt. It is the man of business in his temptation—nay, his Agony and Bloody Sweat. Not Jesus in the New Testament legend was more sorely tempted of another Devil. "Shall I attempt this plan?" quoth he. What it is appears not—importing Coolies, or African slaves, cheating the government or the people—this only is clear, he intends some great wrong to other men. "I can do it—'twill certainly succeed—no man shall find it out. Then wealth is mine—that is Nobility in a Democracy: with it comes the Power, the Respectability and the Honor it bestows." They fit before him—a great city house wheels into line; a great country house follows, flanked with wide lawns and costly gardens—a whole world of beauty. He sees such visionary entertainments, new flocks of wealthy friends, obsequious clergymen, communing at any table where Success breaks the bread and fills the cup, no matter if but shewbread and wine of iniquity. He tastes the admiration of men who worship any coin, and care not if it bear the laureled head of LIBERTY, a Northern fair-faced maid, or only a Southern Vulture swooping down upon its human prey. He anticipates the wealthy marriage of his modest girls. He sees posts of

ambition close at hand, and all so easy for mounting up to if he be but winged with gold. "All this will I give thee, yea, and much more," says the tempter, "for they are mine, and where I will I bestow them. I, Maminon, dwell with honor; Glory is mine, and Respectability; my fruit is better than virtue. The love of riches is the beginning of wisdom. Money crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, How long, ye honest ones, will ye love simplicity? Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil. Did any ever trust in wealth and was confounded? Look about you: how did Mr. Short-weight gain his millions? Yet what honor he lived in! Colleges named him Doctor of Laws, and not Bánker. In funeral sermons ministers put him among the saints. Come thou and do likewise. Money answereth all things, and is imputed unto men for righteousness!"

"Shall I also climb that popular ladder?" asks tortured Jonas. But presently it seems as if his mother's form bent over him. It is the same sweet face which was once so often pressed to his, as she stilled his aching flesh and kissed his little griefs away. His ear tingles warm again, as if that mouth, long silent now, breathed into it her oft-repeated word, "**ONLY THE RIGHT IS ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD.**" "Get you behind me, Devils all," cries he. They vanish into the cold ashes of his grate, while the fair angel that we name Religion, disguised in his mother's saintly shape, comes back and ministers to him. He goes home a strong man; but dreams that night that he was shipwrecked, and in the wildest storm his mother came and trod the waters under her, and brought him safe to land. Then turns he, and dreams again that he was falling, falling, falling through the dark, never so long and far away, and that same strong-winged angel swept between him and the ground, and bore him off unhurt, repeating with its sweet motherly voice:

**"ONLY THE RIGHT IS ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD!"**

He wakes for honest toil and manly duty, with its dear and tranquil joys; and all day long that holy Psalm keeps quiring in his heart:

**"ONLY THE RIGHT IS ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD!"**

How soothing is Religion in sorrow! It is her only boy: Rachel could not save him. The girls were thinned out one by one. Sickness made them only dearer. Death plucked them, flower after flower. When he shook the family bush, how sadly did those white roses cast their petals on the wind! The corner of the village grave-yard seems snowed all over with mementoos of what has been. The father, too, is gone now. In sleep her arms fold together, but only on emptiness, as Love calls up the dear figure to cheat and avoid her grasp. Poor Rachel! all alone now! and dreams add their visionary woe to the live sorrows of the waking day.

Now the last one lies there, straightened after death, a red rose put in his hand. It is the room he was born in. Her bridal chamber once is his funeral chamber now—the beginning of her hopes, the end of her disappointments—a porch only to so many graves. How fair he looks, the brown hair clustered round his brow. Since death, in the dead boy she sees the father's face come out more fair, just as he looked when she was eight and Robert ten, and they gathered chestnuts in the woods, he alone with her and she alone with him; he bearing the little sack their mutual hands had filled, when neither knew nor dreamed those little trodden paths would lead to marriage, and their mutual hand fill many a sack of joys and sorrows too. In the same face she sees her lover and her child—both dead now. That handsome bud will never be a flower. No maiden shall salute those cheeks with the first stealthy modest kiss of heavenly love. The real present and the ideal future meet there, and Rachel sits between, the point common to both; a wife without a husband, a mother with no child. Poor Rachel! Is there any consolation? She feels the Infinite Father is with her: he loves her husband better than she loved him, when passion melted the twain to one; loves the child better than she loved her lost one, her only one—her Boy. The Infinite Father is with her. In her early love she looked to him and was not ashamed. That day-star of Piety gleamed white in the roseate flush of her maiden love; through the throbbing joy of her bridal she looked up to the Infinite One, Father of bridegroom and of bride. When one by one those little sprigs pushed out from the married boughs, Rachel remembered him who never forgets us in our heedlessness, thankful for the old life continued, the new life lent. Does she now forget the Rock whence our earthly houses be hewed out and builded up?

The neighbors look on the surface of her life—how disturbed it is, the great deep all broken up! But underneath it all, below the troubled depth of her sorrow, there is a deeper deep whereto she goes down. It is all still there, and, face to face, she communes with Him who will be with us in deep waters. In the ecstasy of grief she finds that settled joy of heart which transcends all other joys. She looks into another world and sees her white rosebuds, and the last, the red, open in the light of heaven and flower out to fairer maiden and manly beauty than earth knows of in temperate or in tropic lands! while amid those dear ones the mortal father, immortal now, who went before his boy, walks like a gardener among his plants, and makes ready also a place for her! “Thy will, not mine be done; it is well with the child.” She needs no other prayer. The Comforter has come, that same Comforter who was in the beginning and cheered the hearts of millions before the name of Jesus was ever spoke on land or sea. Poor Rachel, is it? Then who, I ask, is rich? Henceforth she has a charmed life, her smiles fewer but serener and more heartfelt. The air is cool and delicate about her; the endemics of the

ground can stir no fever in that tranquil blood. Her great sorrow has seemed a great religion, which fills her with stillness. A wife without a husband, a mother without a living child, is she alone, think you? The Infinite Father is with her, in her, and she also in him. Call not that lonely which is so densely populated with God.

How the winds blow on the surface, at the human level; with what wrathful sweep tread those posters of the sea and land! Go a few furlongs up, and you have left the whirlwind behind you; you are above the thunder, and beneath your feet the harmless lightnings flash unheard away; all the noises of Sebastopol and Waterloo roll by and leave no mark on the most delicate ear. Even the earthquake is not felt in that calm deep of the upper air! On the sea, go down not many rods,

"The water is calm and still below,  
For the winds and waves are noiseless there,  
And the sands are bright as the stars that glow  
In the motionless field of upper air.  
And life, in rare and beautiful forms,  
Is sporting amid those bowers of stone,  
And is safe when the wrathful spirit of storms  
Has made the top of the wave his own."

How old and gray-headed Mr. Grandfather is. At Boston, in 1783, he heard the bells ring for Peace, which meant also Independence. His thoughtful mother, not without prayers, watched his cradle at the beginning of the storm of Revolution. Now he is old, very old. He has been out on the sea of life and done business in its great waters. Many a proud wave has gone over him. But he got through. Children and children's children are the crown of triumph for his old age. Yet he is more religious than old. He stoops a little now, and sometimes slumbers in his chair. The mists of the valley which all must tread lie spread out before him, white with the moonlight of old age. Of a pleasant day he sallies forth, staff in hand, this Oedipus, who has met the Sphynx of time and solved the great riddle of life, and he wonders "where the old people are?" How young the world looks to his experienced eyes! He lifts his hat to some venerable man whom he saw christened in the meeting-house so long ago that the ink has turned brown on the yellow paper in the parish book. There is a funeral to-day of a white-haired woman, old, very old. Mr. Grandfather remembers her as a chubby little rosy-cheeked maiden, with black hair, and eyes so full of fun, just getting into her teens when he was but half-way there. Now he reads on the silver plate, "Aged XCIV." "Ninety-four?" quoth he, "a great age. Yes, I knew she was about that! A great age. Fourscore and fourteen! Six more, and it is a hundred." He remembers the green-gages she used to give him out of her father's great garden; now it is built all over with huge granite stores, four stories high, and the pear trees and plums which Mr. Blackstone brought over from England have followed their planter long since. He

remembers her wedding—seventy-six years ago last July, boy of twelve that he was. On the plain table of those “good old times” he set a china bowl of white lilies, which he swam for in Hammond’s Pond that morning, to honor his pretty cousin’s marriage with. It was the first time they ever had such flowers at a Puritan wedding; but the minister liked it, so did cousin Lucy, but the *new* cousin thought only of her who made him so happy. “Now she is clad for another change,” quoth Mr. Grandfather, as he lays his last gift of blossoms on her coffin; “always a little before me, never long; born seven years first, wed twelve years before me. We shall meet again before long. This is the last of earth for you; soon it will be for me. Well, I am content. ‘Shock of corn fully ripe’—let the dear Father come and take of his planting, at the great Harvest Home. To die is also gain.”

That night Mr. Grandfather tarries late in his sitting-room, when the rest are gone to bed. He slept a little after supper in his great arm chair, and is quite wakeful now. The old clock stands there; it tells the hours of human time; nay, with delicate hand it marks even the seconds, just as life itself will always do. It reports likewise the days of the month and of the week, the shape of the moon; on the top of all is a ship at sea, rising and falling by wheel work, as if driven by the wind and tossed. Mr. Grandfather looks into his wood fire, and then all the long voyage of his past life comes pictured to him from his cradle to cousin Lucy’s funeral. There are sad things to look on, which bring back a tear; he did not know it till it fell hot on his hand and made him start. There are joyous things also, which set his heart throbbing as when he was a bridegroom. Nay, there are wrong things which he did, repented of, and outgrew so long ago that they seem merely historical, like the sins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; yet he remembers the lesson they taught. His boyish loves return—father and mother, children—nay, children’s children. The wife of his heart, reverently buried years ago, comes back in bridal garments, then sits at the new cradle. Then another funeral rushes on his sight: “Lover and friend thou puttest far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness,” quoth he. “Nay, nay, not into darkness; say rather into marvellous light! My time is not far off. How long, O Lord? How soon? Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” The old clock strikes twelve; the first day of another month comes into its place, and the new moon lifts its silver rim to tell below what heavenly life goes on above. “Soon shall I behold thy face in righteousness, and I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”

I wonder any man can be content to live without the joyous consciousness of God; without this how any one can bear the griefs of time, I know not, nor cannot even dream. I would be certain that my little ven-

ture is insured at the Provident office of the Infinite God ; then shall I fear no shipwreck, but steer my personal craft as best I may, certain of a harbor ; and though it be at the bottom of the sea, I am safe landed in heaven. If I have well done my part, and where or when it may, I am sure the voyage will turn out fortunate.

O young men and young women ; men and women no longer young ! It is not enough to be brave and thoughtful ; not enough to be moral also, and friendly each to each. You have a Faculty which makes another World for you, the World of God. There is a joy which is not in wisdom, with all its science and its art of beauty and of use ; nor yet in Morality, with its grand works of justice ; nay, nor yet even in the sweet felicity of loving men and being loved in turn by them ; there is a life within the Veil of the Temple ; it is the Life with God, the Innermost Delight of human Consciousness. Animated by that your Wisdom shall be greater, more true your Science, and more fair your Art ; your Morality more firm and sure, your Love to men more joyous and abiding, your whole Character made useful, and beautiful exceedingly.

## Correspondence.\*

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### GENERAL EPISTLE

*Of the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, to the Yearly and other Meetings with which we are in correspondence, and to the lovers of Truth and Progress wherever located.*

BELOVED FRIENDS:—We prize very highly the privilege of corresponding with sincere and earnest minds who, like ourselves, are impressed that religion divorced from humanity is a scourge to the human race.

We are animated in receiving your words of cheer and encouragement. We say to you in turn, *work on!* Let your faith be exhibited by deeds of mercy and love. Multitudes have yet to learn the nobility there is in labor. When they receive the Divine anointing, they will learn, through obedience to Divine laws, that labor is an ordinance of Heaven for the elevation of man. Experience satisfies us that the anti-sectarian character of our association is a constant source of vitality. Our distinctive idea we have found it useful to repeat. *Theology* is not religion. Bockinger, a learned French writer, said of Sakia, the reformer among the Hindoos, "he did not invent a system altogether new. He merely pronounced *strongly* and *clearly*, that which many of his contemporaries had obscurely felt. He made himself the representative of opposition to Brahminism which had existed some time among them." So it was with us at the beginning of our movement. We set forth our conviction "that Churches, however high their pretensions of authority derived from God, are only human organizations and the repositories of only such powers as may have been rightfully conferred upon them by the individuals of whom they are composed, or derived from the laws of our social nature;" that "too long have the common people been deluded with the idea, that the Church holds a mysterious organic relation to the Infinite—a relation distinct from that existing between the soul and its Creator, and conferring special powers and prerogatives;" that "no error has done more than this to debase and enslave the mind of man, to fetter his godlike powers, and make him the ready instrument of superstition and priesthood;" that "this is the most vicious element of Popery, from which our Protestant sects are not yet delivered." Time only proves to us that we were not alone in these views, but that they had been pondered in the hearts of many, who only waited an opportunity to express them.

We should be humble and grateful for the privilege of living and working in the present period of the world's history. We hope to be preserved from a spirit of egotism, for the most devoted and earnest lover of truth has contributed but very little towards producing the present great awakening. The hand of a child may set in motion a rock

\* Want of room compels us to omit several letters and to abbreviate others.

nicely balanced on the edge of a precipice. The rock may be thrown from its place and hurled with irresistible velocity into the valley below. Thus Divine truths are sometimes poised so nicely that comparatively insignificant means may hurl them with powerful effect upon the head of error. But as the rock finds the valley from its own intrinsic weight, and not from the feeble power which set it in motion, so does truth reach its result, not from the feeble hand by which it is wielded, but by its own inherent mighty power. We respond to the sentiments of a beloved correspondent\* who said to us, "We are in the midst of the most important era in the life of Christianity: neither the period when it detached itself from the Jewish ritual under the leadership of Paul, nor the time when it shook off the scarlet cloak of Rome by the strong arm of Luther, were crises so important as ours, when it is slowly and painfully disengaging itself from the creeds and ceremonies that were the natural expression of middle age culture, and clothing itself anew in the forms of thought and life appropriate to a world already made a family by the telegraph, and modified in all its habits by an advancing intelligence and freedom."

Our Meeting this year has been large beyond all precedent. We have had the acceptable presence and coöperation of a number of well-known and beloved co-laborers, among them Theodore Parker, Charles C. Burleigh, Andrew Jackson Davis and Mary F. Davis.

On the first day the house was densely crowded, and thousands who could not gain access stood in the yard, and were addressed from the vestibule. The immense crowd, all standing, gave earnest attention.

Our Committee on Education reported, in substance, that in consequence of the late financial pressure, they had been unable to take any definite steps towards the organization of a seminary of learning; but they were united in the opinion that the contemplated institution should preserve the family relations and character sufficiently to secure the pupils from those immoral influences and violations of physiological laws which so frequently undermine the moral purity and the physical health of the students in our Colleges and Universities.

Our Committee appointed last year for the purpose of holding meetings, produced a very satisfactory and encouraging report. Conventions held by them in divers places, were often attended by overflowing numbers, who invariably gave kind and courteous audience to the anti-sectarian and reformatory sentiments which were uttered. We have appointed a new and larger Committee this year.

The Committee on Testimonies produced reports on Slavery, Caste, Coëquality of Woman, War, Tobacco, Intemperance, Sectarianism, Revivals, Treatment of Criminals, and Education, which were adopted.

The discussion upon some of these questions was interesting and very profitable. We also agreed to publish a very able and lucid paper on Public Worship, by Charles K. Whipple, of Boston.

With salutations of love, we are your friends.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,  
OLIVER JOHNSON,  
SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, } Clerks.

\* A. D. Mayo.

## FROM THE WATERLOO YEARLY MEETING.

Your epistle was received and read in our meeting, and greeted by us as an expression of fraternal feeling from those, distant personally, but near in spirit—natural, spontaneous, and therefore mutually pleasant and advantagous.

We are glad to hear of the success of your gathering; to know that while there is no lowering of tone, no compromise of truth, no concealment of views for policy's sake, no putting aside of agitating questions to preserve a false peace, but frank, free speaking, "right out and right on," increasing numbers are with you. Parties and sects seek numbers and popularity as "first things." To gain them, Truth must hourly be crucified, like Christ of old, between two thieves. Platform and creed must embody only what is established, honored, and therefore authoritative. Thought must be fettered, lest it stray outside the pale of respectability; words of frank rebuke, ideas springing up, fresh and inspiring from the heart, questionings in regard to life's great duties and the occasions of to-day, must be hushed to soft whispers and soon silenced, lest the walls of some little Zion fall, and free humanity walk with rude step over the ruins.

So children build houses of paper cards, fancying them lasting wood and stone, yet fearfully rear them in some corner, lest the wind shall puff away their frail walls.

It is not for us to imitate such poor example. Men and women must "put away childish things," and be strong, free, kind, wise and brave; must gladly come together, and welcome each honest word, whether it utters their precise thought or not; must have such grand faith in Truth as to know that it will flourish in a free atmosphere, since, by its inherent power, it has lived and triumphed despite of dungeon, rack and fetter, and even gained victories over the subtle blandishments of ease and wealth, so enervating and dangerous.

As the priests of old exorcised the foul fiend with "bell, book and candle," even so must we, by the mightier spell of frank words, coming from bravely earnest souls, cast out of our meetings that timid fear of rebuking popular and powerful wrongs, that weak sensitiveness which shrinks from meeting and questioning new ideas, that dread of a thorough speaking of truth, endorse or condemn who or what it may, so common among men. If numbers are with us in this, it is well; if not, we are strong, though few, (better far than to be weak, though many,) and in time shall move the world.

Our meeting opened Sunday morning, amidst clouds and rain, with a good audience, largely increased in the afternoon, and to the last day a goodly number were present, although the weather was unpropitious.

Men and women came, endeavoring to think freely, to speak and hear candidly. We were favored with the presence of those gifted with persuasive eloquence of speech. Many, too, whose feelings found no utterance, were eloquent at heart, and their presence and influence helped to create that moral magnetism, that blending of souls so sweetly pleasant, so deeply *felt*, so well described in that quaintly expressive phrase of the early Friends as a "precious covering" over our meeting.

During the first day Jacob Dickinson, of Oswego County, Oliver Johnson, Philip D. Moore, Aaron M. Powell, G. B. Stebbins and others spoke.

Andrew Jackson Davis made some very suggestive remarks on the

power, vitality, and immortality of great ideas. Freedom from arbitrary authority, obedience to the soul's highest demands, the blessed privileges and enjoyments of true Freedom, were prominent subjects, the interest increasing until a late hour of adjournment.

The second day slavery, the sacredness of true marriage, the evils woman suffers as wife and mother under our laws, customs, and false views, occupied attention. Mary F. Davis made some feeling, eloquent, and able remarks on the last subject.

A paper from Elizabeth C. Stanton, clear and valuable, on the same subject, was also read by Susan B. Anthony, who the next day gave an excellent address in favor of the joint education of the sexes.

Some difference of opinion existed as to some parts of a testimony against slavery; after discussion, a majority expressed themselves in its favor, other topics were taken up with unity and interest; thus are we learning to agree to disagree.

On the third day, War, Intemperance, the prevalent false views of Inspiration and Authority, were also spoken of as evils to be remedied.

The more advanced and rational class of teachings of the Harmonial or Spiritual views and ideas, were commended as worthy of acceptance, with the wise discrimination those teachings themselves enjoin. An Oberlin student read a document against infidelity. Lucy A. Coleman, Mr. Shattuck, and several others occupied the time, which was so limited that many subjects were passed over.

We are encouraged by the feeling that in sustained interest, in varied ability of speech, in a prevailing sentiment that it was indeed "good for us to be here"—as well as in numbers—this meeting surpassed previous ones, pleasant as they had been.

The genial hospitality of friends in the vicinity was truly pleasant.

Accept our heartfelt wish that your partings from your meetings at their close, may be, as were ours, with the trust that your souls have been fed and strengthened, and that truly religious influences have been around you.

We close with an expression of cordial desire for the growth of Love, Wisdom and Harmony among you.

In behalf of Waterloo Yearly Meeting of Friends of Human Progress.

JAMES TRUMAN, }  
SUSAN B. ANTHONY, } Clerks.

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FROM THE MICHIGAN YEARLY MEETING.

Deeply recognizing the friendly feeling which prompted the fraternal communication from the last Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends of Pennsylvania, the friends of Human Progress of Michigan, in Yearly Meeting assembled at Battle Creek, are glad to send you our God-speed in return.

Our Second Yearly Meeting was held in Battle Creek, on the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th days of October last. Its proceedings were of great interest, and were characterized by general harmony and hearty co-working in all humanly useful and elevating endeavors.

Resolutions were passed embodying the highest ideal of the friends on nearly all the subdivisions of Progress, and the following subjects were discussed.

The principle of Freedom, without distinction of color, was presented

by Sojourner Truth, Martin, a fugitive slave, Charles C. Burleigh and Parker Pillsbury; its discussion occupied fully one-third of the ten sessions of the Yearly Meeting, and many views were advanced which were new to many of the friends who were assembled.

The principle of Freedom, without distinction of sex, was earnestly represented by Mary F. Davis. The interest which was manifested promises well for the speedy alteration of the law of our State, a full recognition and guarantee of Woman's Right of Property and of Suffrage. Besides the address of Mrs. Davis, delivered on Sunday, and before an audience so large that it could be accommodated under no roof in the place, a communication was read from the pen of H. F. M. Brown, of Cleveland, which was well received.

The principle of Freedom of the Public Lands was set forth by friend Pease, of Cincinnati, whose address was characterized by great benevolence and earnestness.

The principle of Freedom of Religious Opinion was ably vindicated by a communication from friend Charles K. Whipple, of Boston.

A resolution calling for a better system of Education, especially for women, elicited much interest and many suggestions for improvement.

It was resolved that the introduction of so-called modern Spiritualism had promoted human progress, physically and spiritually. Friend Hewitt claimed that Spiritualism embraced all other reforms, and Mary F. Davis gave an address on its uses and abuses.

Harmonial Philosophy, the new Era in which Power, Wisdom and Love are united, was represented by its apostle, Andrew Jackson Davis.

The Unity in Diversity of all things in the Universe,—especially of Religions, and of all movements for the amelioration of the condition of the Race,—was the subject of addresses from Chas. C. Burleigh and Charlotte M. Beebe.

From the first session until the last, the attendance was undiminished and the interest unabated. A large number of persons were present from Wisconsin, Illinois and the remote towns of Michigan. The success of this meeting leads us to hope that we shall be able to send you reports of meetings of increasing interest for years and years to come, until the special subjects of our present discussion shall have been rendered obsolete by the advance of civilization, and be superseded by higher and still higher ranges of truth.

C. M. BEEBE, *Secretary.*

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#### FROM NORTH COLLINS (N. Y.) YEARLY MEETING.

We again embrace the opportunity afforded us to renew our testimony in favor of truth and righteousness, and to send an encouraging word to kindred associations.

The unfoldings of truth and development of soul which we witness everywhere promise greater results than our most sanguine hopes had pictured. We feel strengthened and encouraged by associating together in our Yearly Meetings; it awakens within us the God-given elements of our nature, which bid us speak against the vices and wrongs under which our beautiful earth is groaning. The universal expression of the spirit of the age is, "Free thought, free speech, free men and women." Then let us all, inspired by one sentiment, work together for the welfare of the human family, and use every method to prevent the spread of physical,

mental, and intellectual slavery, war, intemperance, and every social wrong, and degrading vice, together with the midnight darkness which Church and Priest have so long used as a shroud over the minds of the people, shutting out the blessed light and sunshine of Heaven. And as we emerge from this chaos, and a new order of things takes place, we find ourselves, each one, becoming the temple of the living God, and that the humblest and frailest are not shut out from his Divine inspiration, but that all shall hear the heaven-born whisper of immortal truth, telling them of the glories of the invisible world.

Grateful for the success that has attended our past efforts, and for the words of encouragement which greet us, we hope to be found faithful to the light we have, assured that a greater shall be yet revealed. It is our earnest desire that your meeting may be a pleasant and profitable occasion, and advance the cause of religious progress and social development.

Signed by direction, and on behalf of the Meeting of the Friends of Human Progress, held in North Collins, Erie Co., N. Y.

MARY SMITH TAYLOR.

FROM M. E. GODDARD.

SO. READING, VT., May 20th, 1858.

DEAR PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS:—It is pleasing, while the minions of Sectarianism are raising a hue and cry over their recent proselytes throughout the land, to chronicle the fact that the advocates of Free Thought in all the great human interests are not dismayed or inactive.

As a Vermonter, I feel somewhat proud in sending you this Call. Though the liberal element is nowhere in the country stronger than in Vermont, this is the first united attempt towards combining all the liberal, progressive and reformatory elements in a grand co-operative movement and general understanding. Our scattered population has operated to put off this till we were fully ripe for it. Like many of the signers of this Call, I have been familiar with your movement almost since its commencement,—from newspaper accounts and the printed Proceedings of your Yearly Meetings. I was charmed from the first with your free platform, and have watched your progress and history with a great deal of interest; and do rejoice most sincerely in your prosperity. Auspicious omens also cheer on the cause of Progress and Reform among the freedom-loving sons of the Green Mountains. Having so long heard your yearly voice, I could not forbear—though a stranger—sending you this Call, as an evidence that you have sympathizers and co-laborers here, and bidding you God-speed in the great work of the emancipation and elevation of Humanity.

Truly yours,

M. E. GODDARD.

#### CALL TO THE FRIENDS OF HUMAN PROGRESS.

The disenthralment of humanity from all such influences as fetter its natural and vital growth is too evidently the condition of all Progress, and, therefore, the duty of Philanthropy, to need enforcement in this Call. The history of the past is beautiful only at the points where it records the encroachments of human freedom on the natural limitations or artificial tyrannies imposed upon thought and action. And the future is hopeful only in such proportion as it points towards a wise and well-grounded emancipation of the race from the *spiritual* despots that, on the one hand, now control *thought*, and the *civil* and *social* disabilities that, on the other,

restrain action, into that free and pure life which both are yet destined to attain. Every Philanthropist, therefore, welcomes the increasingly manifest tendencies of the present age to challenge the institutions that claim control over humanity, and to insist that those claims shall be appealed to the tribunal of demonstrable facts and rigid induction, rather than to "the traditions of the elders."

The signers of this Call desire to aid in carrying up this appeal. They believe the time has come when the friends of Free Thought in Vermont will find it both pleasant and profitable to take counsel together, and have a mutual interchange of sentiment on the great topics of Reform. That there would be entire harmony of *doctrine and symbol* among us, is not to be expected, but it is believed that in *purpose*, we should "see eye to eye," and it is *purposes*, not *creeds*, that vitalize and harmonize effort.

With these convictions, we, whose names are appended to this Call, do most cordially and earnestly invite all Philanthropists and Reformers in and out of the State, to meet in FREE CONVENTION, at Rutland, Vt., on the 25th, 26th and 27th of June next, to discuss the various topics of Reform that are now engaging the attention and effort of Progressive minds.

By a reference to the names appended to this Call, it will be evident that it is not the project of any special branch or division of Reformers—having some Shibbleth of its own to be mouthed with provincial accent—but the unanimous movement of those who hail from every section of the great Army of Reform, and who have no watchword but *Humanity*. The catholicity of spirit and purpose, which will characterize the proposed meeting, are thus sufficiently guaranteed, and the assurance well-grounded that every theme will be frankly and fairly treated at the hands of the Convention, and thus the interests of the largest philanthropy secured.

Come then, friends of Free Thought. Come one, come all. Men of all religious creeds, and men of no creed, shall find equal welcome. And woman too, let her come, both to adorn by her presence, and strengthen by her thought, and give depth and earnestness to the action of this gathering in behalf of Humanity. Let her vindicate, by her own eloquence and zeal, the social position she is so nobly and rapidly winning for herself. The only common ground on which we seek to meet, is that of *fearless discussion*, and the only pledge we make is to bring a rational investigation to the solution of every problem involving the social or religious duty and destiny of the race. In this faith we hail all as brethren and co-laborers.

[Signed by more than 150 persons, from more than forty different towns in Vermont.]

#### FROM A MEETING OF PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS.

WAYNE, ASHTABULA COUNTY, Ohio, April 25th, 1858.

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS:—It is thus the friends in Wayne and vicinity would greet you. Though scattered throughout the land at remote distances from each other, we yet feel drawn to you by the magnetic bonds of a common sympathy. If any thing were wanting to complete the circuit of unitary feeling, the trials incident to our position as Progressive Friends would abundantly supply that want.

At these times, when religion and creed are accepted as synonymous terms, and when man is robbed of every right in the name of Democracy, 'twould be strange indeed if *the still small voice of God in the soul* were not regarded as a symptom of madness—the Higher Law as a rhetorical flourish—the Golden Rule as a "glittering generality," and the names of those who endeavor to give vitality to these by *living true lives*, as fit only to be "cast out as evil."

As in days long past, those who labored as pioneers in the work of human advancement were regarded as dreamers or enthusiasts, or as "turning the world upside down," so must we bear the reproach and jeers of those who cannot see from our stand-point. But the orthodoxy of today was the heresy of a past age; may this cheer us as the "pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night," through a pilgrimage otherwise

made dreary by the lifeless forms and decaying systems strewn along our pathway.

Mutual effort in a common cause, in its very nature, tends to awaken sentiments of fraternal regard; how deep and strong then must that friendship be, when the work in which we are engaged is prompted by Humanity, guided by Reason, Justice and Truth, warmed by Love, cheered by Hope and blessed by Religion!

In view of the Past, the Present and the Future, with the deepest faith in God, and man, we would say:

"Persevere! persevere!  
Do not falter, do not fear,  
First, resolve to do the right—  
Then pursue it with our might,  
Sternly, calmly, hold our place—  
Look derision in the face,  
Give the world to understand,  
We have firmness to command,  
At least ourselves; then laugh at fear,  
Persevere! persevere!"

Signed on behalf of the Meeting of Progressive Friends held in Wayne, Ohio, May 2d, 1858.

JOHN BROWN, Jr., Clerk.

FROM CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

BOSTON, May 24th, 1858.

Being unable to indulge myself in the gratification of attending your meeting, I send instead a word of encouragement and counsel.

During the past winter and spring, a contagious disease has spread its ravages far and wide over the country. The priesthood of the popular American religion have succeeded in producing "a revival" of it, and thus have been extending superstition and obstructing the progress of Christianity; exalting creeds and forms, the *profession* of religion, and discouraging those works of reform which are its *substance*; teaching the *fear* of God, instead of that perfect love of Him which casts out fear, being incompatible with it; persuading the people, by the pretence that *they* are God's special ambassadors, to receive their teachings in opposition to that *reason* which He has Himself placed in the breast of every man, for his guidance; and directing men's interests and aspirations towards a future life *by such means and in such a manner, and with such instructions,* as to make them neglect the most obvious duties of the present, and to fortify, rather than remove, the chief vices and evils of the world in which we now live.

After having witnessed, through the six months which have just passed, the success of the clergy in building up the popular religion, and in enlarging the sects which unite in maintaining its superstitious observances, it is refreshing to turn to an Association which has juster ideas, both of the faith and the works which constitute Christianity; which seeks to carry out in actual life the Divine truths which Jesus of Nazareth taught; to show that religion is, as Paul declared it to be, "a *reasonable service*;" to teach Christianity *without Judaism*; to direct men to the loving, universal Father, instead of to a local, limited, partial, passionate Jehovah; to persuade them to come *fearlessly* to that Father, as children should, without mediator or atonement, even though they may hitherto have been "*prodigal sons*;" and, in regard to future duty, to show them that help to the

poorest, weakest, "least" of their brethren, is at once the best service and the best worship of that universal Father.

Beloved friends, you well know that faith, without works, is dead ; that if you really hold and teach the great truths above mentioned, they will bring forth fruit in your lives ; and that just now, (after the elaborate cultivation which superstition and Pharisaism have received from the late "revival" of the popular religion,) is the true day of judgment as to the comparative practical merits of these opposing systems ; as to the excellence and abundance of the "fruits" which they respectively bring forth. I call upon you to give "testimony" upon this point with your lives as well as your lips. At the commencement of your year, you publish, in speech and print, a protest against those great popular sins which churchlings and worldlings unite in practising and defending. I call upon you to follow up this protest by energetic *action*, through the coming year, action far more vigorous and persistent than you have ever yet used, against that wicked and pernicious system, that corrupter of religion, morals and manners, that "sum of all villainies," American slavery.

Never since the commencement of this nation has the Slave Power shown itself so daring, profligate, insatiable and insolent as at present. The State is its instrument, its tool, not shrinking from its meanest and dirtiest work ; the Church is its bulwark and defence ; the great associations which call themselves "religious" (whereof the American Tract Society is now most prominent) give their strength, more or less openly, to its support ; and the recent "revival" has fortified the pro-slavery element in the Church, and in these, its daughters, and has also brought a great auxiliary force, of men and money, to strengthen them. Never was the need so urgent for those who love right and hate tyranny to show themselves ; to fling abroad their banner and raise their gathering cry ; to be as conspicuous, as active, and as aggressive for freedom, as Buchanan and Taney, Hallock and South-side Adams are for slavery. The struggle which is now going on around us, and the momentous import of which we fail to realize, (perhaps because it is so near us,) is destined to accomplish no less for the welfare of mankind than those which Luther formerly led in the religious, and Hancock and Adams in the political world. This generation is now called upon to finish the work which those great men, in their respective spheres, left half done ; and every one of us may now have the honor, and reap the advantage, of helping forward some department of this vast enterprise, and hastening the day when LIBERTY, *civil and religious*, shall be proclaimed through this whole land, to every one of the inhabitants thereof.

I call upon you, beloved friends, if you be indeed "*Progressive Friends*," to recognize the truth that you may work most efficiently in this department by strengthening the hands, extending the influence and joining in the labors, of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Put your money into their treasury, assist the movements of their agents, take, read and circulate their papers, make vigorous efforts to increase the circulation of their official organ, the "*ANTI-SLAVERY STANDARD*," join your voices to their cry—"No more Union, in Church or State, with slaveholders!"—and agitate unceasingly, first, until no slave shall be obliged to run further North than Pennsylvania to find a land of freedom, and next, until no human being, in any part of our continent, shall need to fear the enforcement, or to hear the utterance, of the impious claim, that another human being *owns him*. In love and trust, your friend,

CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

FROM WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

BOSTON, May 28, 1858.

The recollection of what I saw, what I heard, what I enjoyed at your last annual meeting, makes my heart throb with such pleasurable emotions, that I know not how to be absent from your approaching anniversary. But circumstances constrain me to remain at home, and I can only send you all, my loving remembrances and fervent benediction.

As a matter of friendly accommodation, I have consented to act as a substitute for my friend, Theodore Parker, in Music Hall, on Sunday next—not to fill his place, of course, for who but himself can do that? but to make it convenient for him to be with you. Of his rare culture, his scholarly proficiency, his mental force, his liberal mind, his philanthropic and progressive spirit, and his massive brain, (in which a whole Alexandrian library of knowledge appears to be stored, not for mere ornament or selfish accumulation, but for constant use and circulation,) I need say nothing. He is too widely known in Christendom to need an introduction in any part of it. He has been with you before, and you will deem it a high privilege to have him with you again.

I take it for granted that the noble testimonies borne at your last gathering will be substantially reiterated this year, with whatever emphasis and enlargement the times may seem to require. But let us remember that we live in deeds, not in words. Let us be careful to lay down no principle to violate it ourselves, or to wink at its violation in others. Moral consistency of action is, alas! very difficult to be found, and not very easy to attain; yet it remains eternally true, that we cannot serve God and Mammon, nor embrace Christ and Belial, at the same time. Wherever duty points the way, there let us walk unfalteringly, nor dread the lions that may threaten to devour us. Let our song be, "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Yours, fraternally,  
WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

FROM SAMUEL MAY, JR.

*General Agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.*

LEICESTER, Mass., May 28, 1858.

Your invitation to attend the Sixth Yearly Meeting of the Progressive Friends of Pennsylvania has reached me. I thank you for it, and assure you that its acceptance would afford me one of the highest pleasures I know, —one, however, that circumstances compel me to forego, and to content myself with awaiting the report of the good works you shall do, and the noble words you shall speak, for humanity, and so for God. I have not forgotten, nor shall I soon forget, the beautiful August Sunday which I spent two years ago at Longwood meeting-house. The spot, and the human faces and souls which made it appear so hopeful and so bright, are fresh in my memory.

At my distance I watch your meeting, your association, and your doings,

with much of hope and of solicitude. The only sect with which I have ever been connected has taught me a momentous lesson, which I should be dull indeed not to discern, and culpable not to remember. It did not, indeed, purpose to be a sect, but disclaimed and opposed sectarian aims and objects, and sought to lead men out of sectarian trammels and away from all bondage of parties, to help them break the chains of superstition, of human fear and intellectual vassalage, and to bring them into the "glorious liberty of children of God." It was, in this country, a great advance-movement, in Morals and in Religion; and while Channing lived, and Follen, and others whose names perhaps are not less worthy of respect than theirs, it continued to be a movement onward, and it educated many souls to bear a brave and manly part in the toil and contest for the Right and the Truth. In those first days of the movement, of which I speak, in those days when it did not court the favor of man, nor fear to be unpopular, when it despised and shunned the artifices and contrivances of the sects, it did a great and generous work, and stamped its image upon many who are yet with us, living to exalt, to bless, and to free mankind. But the brave spirits, who had been, in our country, and especially in New England, the pioneers and leaders of this moral advance, passed away from among us, and other hands were laid upon the helm,—hands which knew but little of the noble aims to which the movement they aspired to direct was pledged,—knew little and cared less. Then machinery, and formality, and cheap emotion, took the place of vigorous thought, of courageous battling with individual and national wrong, and of fearless search for all truth, human and divine; and the decline and fall of all that was peculiar and precious in New England Unitarianism commenced. The movement has long since ceased to be an onward one, and that which once was large, with a greatness which depended not upon numbers, has now become small, and feeble, and listless, simply striving to hold a place among other sects. The disappointment, and sorrow, and discouragement, which have been experienced by many, in consequence of this degeneracy, no words can express; and while I still gratefully and gladly join with others in efforts to advance every good work, I am admonished to beware that the outward and visible form do not again usurp with me the place of the substance, and a poor conformity be preferred to manly protest and righteous dissent for truth's and conscience' sake.

You will understand me, therefore, when I say that I watch your movement not only with hope but with solicitude. I know well that some of you, too, have come through trials and disappointments, not unlike those I have already adverted to. You have seen the noble testimonies of Elias Hicks, and of others of an earlier time, disregarded and repudiated by many who are willing to build their sepulchres, and who ought to have entered into their labors. Thank God that, forgetting things that are behind, you are pressing on to higher and better service in the great field of human action.

Some have objected to your name, "Progressive Friends," as savoring of an over-confident spirit. To me it has a different meaning. I like the words. They indicate a purpose, and a good purpose, viz: to go forward, to "grow" in knowledge, faith, and action; and to do this in a spirit of "friendliness" to all men. And this is the duty of all. We are bound to be ever pressing forward to the mark, and to comprehend all men in our sympathies and brotherly regards as we go. The name too is an incentive, a spur, which the weakness of our flesh and heart often needs. You confess your duty, and make known your purpose, to advance,

against wrong and falsehood, for the truth and the right. To stand still, morally, is impossible. You are resolved to go forward, persevering to the end.

And what shall the law of your progress be? What else can it be, dear friends, than that you will "follow Truth along her star-paved way,"—that you will watch for the light yet to break forth from God's word, from his works, from that perpetual witness of Himself which He leaves no man without? With such guidance, no fear nor doubt can overpower you. The light within you will grow brighter to the perfect day, you will be lifted far above the fear of man and the world's temptation, and your peace and strength will increase forever.

None can fail to observe the growing tendency of the mind of this country to throw off its traditional bondage of every kind. Men are restive. In so wicked and oppressive a nation as this, where even the specially-ordained and consecrated ministers of religion hold it inexpedient and foolish to call sin by its own name, and so league themselves with the oppression and wickedness of the land, and strive to drag the very law of God and the beneficent gospel of Christ down to their own vile level,—in such a nation, men should be restive. It is good to resist the devil, in whatever shape he comes. The question *how* he shall be resisted, assumes a mighty interest and importance. No better element, to decide this question, can be thrown into the moving mass than the example which is set by your meeting, and such as yours,—to examine, test, try every work, institution, creed, party, church, and to know thereby whence it is, what is its character and value, and whether it is to be preserved as good, or cast away to perish as useless, or as a snare and curse to men. Hoping and believing that this true and brave spirit will ever lead you on,

I remain, dear friends, your fellow-worker,

SAMUEL MAY, JR.

FROM JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,

*Minister of the Church of the Disciples, Boston.*

JAMAICA PLAIN, May 27th, 1858.

I have been favored with an invitation, through our friend Oliver Johnson, to attend your meeting on the thirtieth. I feel the honor of such an invitation, and should be gratified if I were able to accept it. It is an honor to be invited to meet a body of men, who would never ask to their meeting those who were distinguished merely as popular celebrities; but who ask those only whom they believe to be earnest well-wishers of their race. And it would be a gratification to me to be present and hear the discussions which will no doubt take place at your Yearly Meeting in relation to the most important interests of our humanity. It will not be in my power to attend this year, more than in previous years; but I will not deny myself the pleasure of saying, through you, to the meeting, that I sympathize with their aims, and pray that their coming together may be productive of good results.

The time is coming and now is, when all sincere lovers of the Saviour may co-operate in doing his work, without regard to difference of opinion and difference of ceremony. When Jesus fed the five thousand, and they sat down on the grass together in companies, it is not to be supposed that they were all dressed alike, or that all had the same method of eating, or

the same way of sitting down. But they were all willing to be fed by Him. They were all hungry for the Master's food. So it may be now with those who widely differ in opinion, but agree in longing for the sincere milk and meat of the Word.

The Church with which I am connected was formed in 1841, on the basis of a simple declaration of "*Faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God*," and the "*desire to co-operate together in the study and practice of Christianity*." Those who sign this declaration become thereby members of the Church, which welcomes to its embrace all who desire to come. Our seats are free to all—our worship is congregational—the whole business of the Society is performed by the whole Church—women having equal rights with the men—speaking and voting with them in regard to all matters secular or religious. So we have gone on for seventeen years, and though not a large or popular body, we are a family of friends, and those who belong to us, belong to us forever. One of our number, Ellis Gray Loring, has just left us for the heavenly world. He was a noble person, one of the earliest supporters and most constant friends of Mr. Garrison in the Anti-Slavery cause. In this great question of the age we are all interested, and have been since the Church was formed. We also, like you, discuss at our meetings, with the utmost freedom, such questions as peace, temperance, non-resistance, marriage, spiritualism, etc. We do not find that this perfect freedom of opinion interferes with our devotion or impairs our sense of the nearness and constant inflowing life and love of our heavenly Father.

With much respect, I am yours,  
JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

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FROM CHARLES D. B. MILLS.

SYRACUSE, May 26th, 1858.

The circular over your names, announcing in behalf of the Progressive Friends of Pennsylvania, the approaching return of the Yearly Meeting at Longwood, is received. Very gladly would I join you, if I might, on that occasion; to be quickened by your presence and refreshed by your words. I am sure that you will convene in the spirit of truth, fidelity, and love, and that you will find deep and life-giving communion together.

The old is passing away, and a new dispensation is opening upon us. The dead will hardly longer stand to men for the living, empty hearsays for vital convictions.

It is a long and wearisome march, that of mankind, through the ages, through the centuries, in search of felicity, of repose, and joy, in the bosom of the Highest. What crude conceptions, what strange misapprehensions, what dark and dreadful idolatries have prevailed! Judaism, in its best estate, rose scarcely higher than the worship of an animal God, a creature swayed by jealous passion and fitful caprice, wielding at will resistless brute force and armed with all-crushing terrors, One to be tremblingly feared and implicitly obeyed, not intelligently recognized, reverently adored and filially honored.

Christianity, initiated by the appearance in history of Jesus, the living words and noble deeds and heroic sufferings of this young carpenter of Nazareth touching and ravishing the souls of men, grew up apace in new beliefs, and blossomed out quickly and widely in new institutions. But almost immediately, it was the worship of a name rather than the recognition

of a thing, attemptedly reposing in Book as greater than Truth, in credence as higher than conviction, in observance as more than life. It also became an idolatry, bowing down in stupid relic-worship, ascribing miracles of healing to Jesus' blood, looking for absolution and salvation to his death, and everywhere attempting incantation through this name.

And to the present hour this veil is upon the heart of Christendom, this sorcery enchanting and intoxicates and maddens. Protestants, essentially one with Romanists in their worship of the outward, trusting wholly in belief and observance—belief implicit and determined in the prescribed, observance blind and persistent of the enjoined. The theology is artificial and sapless, void of vital juices and genuine nourishment for the soul; the dogmas stale and barren, now towering into unintelligible mystery, and anon issuing in absurdity and blasphemy; and the ordinances are foreign, arbitrary, and senseless, a cumbrous yoke, a suffocating prison, having no felt relation to free normal life.

But the day-dawn gleams, and that hour, seen in clear vision by the youthful Jesus as he mused beside Jacob's well, and, as his word of announcement to the Samaritan woman fairly indicates, deemed by him in the enthusiasm of his young heart already then at hand, is at length manifestly approaching. Man is awaking from the long torpor, a higher worship awaits, and the true Catholic Church is to be inaugurated.

Its construction shall be after none of the old patterns. It shall be baptized into no party name. It shall worship by no prescribed symbols. It shall stand not in outward structure, in dogma, and creed, and rite, but in inward life, in vital formation, and normal human growth. Its foundations shall be laid deep and broad as are the elemental principles of human nature, and its temple shall afford fit shrine for the worship of all sincere souls. Its doctrines shall be confessedly the truths of human consciousness, the great verities of thought that shine into all minds, its ordinances the assiduous practice of every manly virtue, the glad doing of every kindly office, the steady culture of the spirit towards all wisdom and excellence; and its communions shall be the fellowship of true hearts, celebrated not in formal rite and solemn ceremony, but flowing and felt in all genuine benign presence of soul to soul, natural as affection, legible as eye-glances, spontaneous as speech, and rich and wide as life.

This Church shall pour a clear and powerful light around, quenching all darkness, banishing ignorance, superstition, and terror, abolishing wrong and crime of every type and grade, and lifting man to freedom, strength, and blessedness. It shall hold and wield miraculous gifts greater than any yet known to history; it shall heal the sick, cleanse lepers, cast out devils, utter oracles, and re-vitalize and regenerate the race. In the earnest fidelity of its freedom, it shall do high deeds for justice, and the shackles shall fall broken from the limbs of every slave. In presence of its lofty sobriety, the drunkard shall be touched, incited, won, passion awed to silence, and manly ambitions awake and astir within him.

That you may be encouraged, prospered, blessed in your endeavors for the introduction thus of heaven's kingdom on the earth, is the sincere prayer of all the true and good of every place and name. Speak freely, do valiantly in obedience to the inmost thought, the highest conviction within you, and your word shall not be empty or your deed in vain. It shall be more than a passing sound, a transient appearance; it shall be dynamic, vital, eternal, one of the permanent facts, a truth ever during, a force never spent.

Yours evermore, for Truth, Justice, Freedom.

CHARLES D. B. MILLS.

FROM AARON M. POWELL.

GUENT, Columbia Co., N. Y., May 25th, 1858.

I deeply regret that from ill health I shall have to forego the prospect of attending this year, the Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, in Pa.

During the several years of those annual gatherings I have noted with much interest the broad, catholic, and liberal Christian spirit, by which they seem uniformly to have been characterized.

The same great law of revolution and development which we recognize in the past, is no less active in our own time. Its manifestations are seen in the rise and modifications of the different religious movements, which now and then crop-out in human society.

Myself of Quaker education, and interested in the past career of the Society of Friends, I have regarded with much interest the rise and growth of this modern association of Progressive Friends, as the legitimate outgrowth, and offspring, more than any other, of the descendants of Fox, Penn, and Hicks.

The times are auspicious for this new association. May it not be forgotten by any of us that "the one condition coupled with the gift of truth is its use," and that the only way to make real progress "is to enact our best insight."

Let the testimonies demanded by topics prominent in public interest be of "no uncertain sound." While by recent adjudication "all evangelical Christians," through their great representative organization, the American Tract Society, are made to approbate the "sum of all villainies" as no sin, but virtually of Divine appointment, I hope Progressive Friends will reaffirm with renewed vigor, by deed as well as word, the *utter sinfulness of any Ecclesiastical or Political union with slaveholders and their apologists.*

Yours fraternally,

AARON M. POWELL.

FROM WILLIAM H. FISH.

CORTLAND, N. Y., May 19th, 1858.

I still keep hoping, from year to year, "against hope," that I shall be yet able to attend one, at least, of your always glorious Yearly Meetings of "Progressive Friends" at Longwood. Last year I promised myself the great privilege of being with you this year, if my circumstances would possibly admit of it; but "circumstances" again say nay, and so I must submit with as much grace as possible. It is a great self-denial, but that, you know, is "the way of the cross"—not of the Churches' cross—a mere "central gallows," to use Channing's figure—but of the cross of reformers—following in the footsteps of Christ. But you will have another good meeting—its interest greatly increased by the presence of that brave and good man, Theodore Parker—and its influence will go out into all the world. We at a distance shall soon hear of it, and be refreshed and encouraged, without doubt, by its published Report, which I shall look for with much anxiety. Thanks to the Spirit of Humanity that is abroad in the world, which is the Spirit of the Father, that the Churches—or, rather, that the ecclesiastical parties of the age—have not control of the Press! Let us have the Report as soon as possible.

But we want very much a Progressive Friends' Meeting here at Cortland. Can't we have one in the Summer or Autumn? The fields are white for the harvest. "Come over and help us."

Fraternally, Wm. H. Fish.

FROM THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.

WORCESTER, Mass., May 26th, 1858.

I feel refreshed, every spring, by the thought of the Progressive Friends' Meeting, although still unable to attend it in person. Suffer me again to put on record my admiration for the wisdom and righteousness of your movement. I see everywhere the evidences that this is to be the greatest religious era the world has ever seen. But, after all, there is nothing better than your meetings. May they grow and prosper, until all conservatives become Progressive, and until all enemies become Friends.

Cordially, yours,

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.

FROM JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS.

HALL OF REPS., WASHINGTON, April 17th, 1858.

I should be more delighted to address the Progressive meeting than they would to hear me. But my friends here have, acting with my physicians, forbidden me to speak. In uttering a few words the other day they say I turned pale, and they were alarmed and peremptorily stopped me. The Speaker declared himself so alarmed that he determined no more to recognize me. Nor have I time to write such a letter as would become me, for I am compelled to forego all close study or intense thought, yet am greatly pressed with official duties, of which you will know more hereafter. But if I can get time, as I think I can, I will meet you at Longwood, and listen to you and others, and enjoy a day or two of relaxation from duties here.

Very truly,

J. R. GIDDINGS.

FROM THOMAS J. MUMFORD,

*Pastor of the Unitarian Church in Detroit.*

DETROIT, May 25th, 1858.

I cannot accept your kind invitation to be at Longwood on the 30th inst., because I must attend another meeting of Progressive Friends at Cincinnati. Our gathering is styled a Unitarian Conference, but I trust that the platform will be as broad, and the spirit as fraternal as can possibly be desired.

Have you noticed that H. W. Beecher declares his cordial approval of the grand principle that underlies your movement? In "Life Thoughts" I find this noble statement of sound doctrine: "You are to accept as a Christian every one whose life and disposition are Christ-like, no matter how heretical the denomination may be to which he belongs. Whenever you find faith, and righteousness, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, you are to look upon them as the stamped coin of Christ's kingdom, and as a legal tender from God to you."

Believing that this will be the only creed of the Church of the Future, and bidding you God speed in your glorious enterprise,

I remain yours, faithfully,

T. J. MUMFORD.

## GEMS OF THOUGHT.

ANY view of God, of which Love is not the centre, is injurious to the soul which receives it.—CHANNING.

ARE we not traitors to great truths, when we suppress the utterance of them, and let the opposite errors pass unrebuked?—Ib.

A SINGLE sentence from the lips of one who has faith in Humanity is worth whole volumes of ordinary sermons.—Ib.

THE greatest and most dangerous error of the age is the substitution of opinion, speculation, controversy, of noise and bustle *about* religion, for the *practice* of Christ's precepts.—Ib.

If we are to obtain brighter and more enlarged conceptions of Christianity, we must begin with feeling that past ages have not exhausted Christian truth, and that we may make advances on the wisdom of our fathers.—Ib.

NOTHING exhibits greater ignorance of the history of the Church and of the history of mankind, nothing is more fitted to reduce the intellect to imbecility, and to carry back the race to barbarism, than the idea that we have nothing more to learn, that Christianity has come down to us pure and perfect, and that our only duty is implicitly to receive the lessons of our catechisms.—Ib.

THERE lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.—TENNYSON.

'Tis the sublime of man,  
Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves  
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole:  
This fraternizes man—this constitutes  
His charities and bearings.—COLERIDGE.

THE sweet words  
Of Christian promise—words that even yet  
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached—  
Are muttered o'er by men whose tones proclaim  
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade.—Ib.

O THEN, fair Truth, for thee alone I seek,  
Friend to the wise, supporter to the weak;  
From thee we learn whate'er is right and just,  
Creeds to reject, professions to distrust,  
Forms to despise, pretensions to deride,  
And, following thee, to follow naught beside.—CRABBE.

A CHURCH should put no fetters on the man; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass, in Church or State, it becomes an offence, a stumbling-block in the way of progress, and must end or mend.—THEODORE PARKER.



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## THE REFORMER.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

ALL grim and soiled and brown with tan,  
I saw a Strong One, in his wrath,  
Smiting the godless shrines of man  
Along his path.

The Church beneath her trembling dome  
Essayed in vain her ghostly charm;  
Wealth shook within his gilded home  
With strange alarm.

Fraud from his secret chambers fled  
Before the sunlight bursting in:  
Sloth drew her pillow o'er her head  
To drown the din.

"Spare," Art implored, "yon holy pile;  
That grand, old, time-worn turret spare;"  
Meek Reverence, kneeling in the aisle,  
Cried out, "Forbear!"

Grey-bearded Use, who, deaf and blind,  
Groped for his old accustomed stone,  
Leaned on his staff, and wept, to find  
His seat o'erthrown.

Young Romance raised his dreamy eyes,  
O'erhung with paly locks of gold:  
"Why smite," he asked in sad surprise,  
"The fair, the old?"

Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,  
Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam;  
Shuddering and sick of heart, I woke,  
As from a dream.

I looked: aside the dust-cloud rolled—  
The Waster seemed the Builder too;  
Up springing from the ruined Old  
I saw the New.

'Twas but the ruin of the bad—  
The wasting of the wrong and ill;  
Whate'er of good the old time had  
Was living still.

Calm grew the brows of him I feared;  
The frown which awed me passed away,  
And left behind a smile which cheered  
Like breaking day.

The grain grew green on battle-plains,  
O'er swarded war-mounds grazed the cow;  
The slave stood forging from his chains  
The spade and plough.

Where frowned the fort, pavilions gay  
And cottage windows, flower-entwined,  
Looked out upon the peaceful bay  
And hills behind.

Thro' vine-wreathed cups with wine once red  
The lights on brimming crystal fell,  
Drawn, sparkling, from the rivulet head  
And mossy well.

Through prison walls, like Heaven-sent hope,  
Fresh breezes blew, and sunbeams strayed,  
And with the idle gallows-rope  
The young child played.

Where the doomed victim in his cell  
Had counted o'er the weary hours,  
Glad school-girls, answering to the bell,  
Came crowned with flowers.

Grown wiser for the lesson given,  
I fear no longer, for I know  
That, where the share is deepest driven,  
The best fruits grow.

The outworn rite, the old abuse,  
The pious fraud transparent grown,  
The good held captive in the use  
Of wrong alone—

These wait their doom, from that great law  
Which makes the past time serve to-day;  
And fresher life the world shall draw  
From their decay.

Oh! backward-looking son of time!—  
The new is old, the old is new,  
The cycle of a change sublime  
Still sweeping through.

So wisely taught the Indian seer;  
Destroying Seva, forming Brahmin,  
Who wake by turns Earth's love and fear,  
Are one, the same.

As idly as, in that old day,  
Thou mournest, did thy sires repine,  
So, in his time, thy child grown gray,  
Shall sigh for thine.

Yet, not the less for them or thou  
The eternal step of Progress beats  
To that great anthem, calm and slow,  
Which God repeats!

Take heart!—the Waster builds again—  
A charmed life old goodness hath;  
The tares may perish—but the grain  
Is not for death.

God works in all things; all obey  
His first propulsion from the night:  
Ho, wake and watch!—the world is gray  
With morning light!

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